

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per Year. Copyright, 1908, by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 297.

NEW YORK, JUNE 26, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST'S RACE FOR GOLD; OR, ARIETTA AND THE BANK ROBBERS.

By AN OLD SCOUT.



"There they go, Wild!" cried Arietta, pointing to the fleeing bank robbers. "The watchman says they got the money, too. Don't let them get away." "All right, Et," was the reply, and putting the sorrel on a gallop, he started in pursuit.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1908, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 297.

NEW YORK, JUNE 26, 1908.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

YOUNG WILD WEST'S RACE FOR GOLD

—OR—

Arietta and the Bank Robbers

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

THE "SPANKING" THAT WAS NOT ADMINISTERED.

"Yip, yip, yip! Wow! Wow! Whoopee!"

As the cowboy yell rang out the clatter of hoofs was heard, and up the single street of the prosperous mining camp called Silver Crown, which was situated at the time of which we write in the western part of Colorado, near the Utah line, came half a dozen horsemen.

A cloud of dust followed them, for there had been no rain in the past few days and the soil was very dry.

The few stores and saloons the little town contained were lined on either side of the street, in the central part of it, and those on the sidewalks turned to look at the approaching cowboys.

Not that it was anything new to see a lot of cowboys come galloping into the town, for that was a common occurrence.

But almost every time it happened there was some excitement attached to it, for cowboys, when they start on a spree, are generally reckless fellows, and they always want to make themselves heard, as well as seen.

"Whoopee! Whoopee! Wow! Wow!"

Again a yell sounded, and then half a dozen shots were fired in quick succession, the bullets going in the air.

Among those to rush out of a saloon to see what was going on was a typical Chinaman, who looked as though he was about as innocent as a "heathen Chinese" could be.

He got to the edge of the street just as the half a dozen reckless riders reached the place.

Another yell sounded, and then a flexible horsehair lariat suddenly shot out from one of the cowboys, and before the Chinaman could duck to escape it the noose had settled about his body.

The next moment the unfortunate Celestial was being dragged through the dust, while the cowboys were yelling themselves hoarse with delight.

Crang!

The sharp report of a Winchester rifle sounded and the rope parted before the Chinaman had been dragged ten feet.

Then a handsome, athletic boy, who was attired in a fancy buckskin hunting suit, came bounding across the street from the general store.

He reached the Chinaman just as he was getting up.

Seizing him by the arm, he helped him to his feet.

"They had you that time, didn't they, Hop?" he said, as he hustled him out of the street on the sidewalk. "Are you hurt any?"

"Me velly muchee shakee uppee, Mislir Wild," was the reply, while a faint smile spread over the yellow countenance of the cowboy's victim. "But me no hurtee, so be."

There were probably twenty men gathered about the spot, for it was just after quitting time for the miners and those who worked at the smelting plant.

The faces of nearly all of them wore smiles, for to see a Chinaman lassoed by a reckless cowboy was amusing to them, to say the least.

But there were a few among them who had seen the dashing boy in the fancy suit of buckskin throw his rifle to his shoulder and sever the rope with a bullet, and they were not a little surprised at the wonderful shot.

The boy and the Chinaman were the centre of attraction just then, and as the cowboys made a turn and came galloping back to the very saloon the Celestial had emerged from before he was lassoed, he brushed back the wealth of chestnut hair that hung below his shoulders and turned his eyes upon them.

Right here we may as well state that the boy was no other than dashing Young Wild West, the Champion

Deadshot and Prince of the Saddle—the greatest of all the heroes of the Wild West.

Hop Wah, the victim of the cowboy's accurate rope, was in his employ as a general utility man and, seeing him caught by the lasso, as he came out of the store across the way, the young deadshot had quickly thrown his rifle to his shoulder, and when he found there was nothing human in the way of the bullet, pulled the trigger.

Young Wild West never missed when he drew bead on a rope at that short distance, and the result was that it was cut as clean as a whistle.

He was not at all angered at the action of the cowboy, but rather blamed the Chinaman for making a target of himself.

Young Wild West knew about the habits of the cowboys as much as any one living, and he considered that it was but natural that the man had roped Hop Wah.

However, if the cowboy did not like it because his horsehair lariat had been cut with the bullet, he was ready to take the consequences.

Cool and daring at any stage of the game, the boy was one who was feared by his foes and loved by those who believed in a square deal.

He soon found that the cowboy did not like what had happened, for he was the first to dismount as the party came back and brought their mustangs to a halt, and, holding the severed lariat in his hand, he called out:

"I kin lick ther galoot what shot my rope in two! Where is he?"

"Here I am!" was the quick reply, and Young Wild West stepped before him, a calm smiling playing about his mouth.

"Did you do it, young feller?" the cowboy asked, an expression of doubt showing from his eyes.

"Yes, I did it. I thought you were going a little too far with my Chinaman, so I just set him free, that's all."

"Yer did, eh? Don't yer know that a rope like mine costs money?"

"Oh, yes. But a Chinaman's life is worth something, too."

"Yer think a heathen's life is worth more than a horsehair rope, do yer? Well, you're only a boy, but I'm goin' ter give yer a good spankin', an' then make yer pay me fur ther rope! Do yer hear what I say? I'm Stinger Sam, from the Two Star Ranch, an' I'm mighty bad when I'm r'iled!"

"Is that so? You are not roiled now, are you?"

The reply was in such a cool tone of voice that the cowboys looked at the boy in astonishment.

It was just then that our hero's two partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, came across the street.

They had been over at the general store when the shot was fired, but they had taken their time about coming over, since they were in charge of the purchases that had just been made there.

Cheyenne Charlie, though an ex-Government scout and a thorough Westerner, chose to follow the lead of dashing Young Wild West on his trips through the wilds of the West in search of fortune and adventure, and he was proud to be called the "pard" of the boy.

Jim Dart was a Western boy about the same age as our hero, and he loved him as a brother, and was ever ready

to stick by him to the death, if necessary, though he seldom had much to say.

"What's ther trouble here, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie asked, as he elbowed his way through the crowd. "Is that measly coyote talkin' about lickin' yer?"

"Yes, Charlie; but you just keep still," was the quick reply. "I reckon he won't hurt me any."

By this time the rest of the cowboys had dismounted, and they all pushed forward, so they might obtain a good view at what took place.

Stinger Sam, as he had introduced himself, shot a glance at the scout, which meant he would like to give him a thrashing, too, but he did not attempt it just then, since he wanted to settle accounts with the boy first.

"Gentlemen," said Wild, calmly, as he motioned the crowd back, "just give us a little room, will you? Stinger Sam is going to spank me, and then he is going to make me pay for the rope I shot in two. He will need plenty of room to do this, for I am going to give him the tussle of his life. I am only a boy, I know; but I have learned a few tricks in my day, and if Stinger Sam spansks me, and then makes me pay for his rope, I'll make every man here a present of a new six-dollar hat and give a free picnic to the inhabitants of Silver Crown! Come on, you big galoot! I am anxious to get the spanking!"

"Wow!" yelled the bad cowboy, and, giving his bear-skin trousers a hitch, he sprang at the boy.

He had both hands outstretched, evidently with the intention of seizing him by the shoulders.

But Stinger Sam certainly reckoned without his host, as the saying goes.

Young Wild West stepped nimbly aside, and the cowboy's hands simply clutched the empty air.

Then, as quick as lightning, the boy gave him a push and he went headforemost into the crowd.

"Hooray!" yelled Cheyenne Charlie, waving his hat. "I reckon ther foolish galoot is takin' divin' lessons. Did yer see him go, boys?"

There was a burst of laughter from the crowd, for the most of them could see now that the boy was simply playing with the bad cowboy from the Two Star Ranch.

They knew that if he had chosen to hit him on the back of his neck, instead of merely pushing him, he would have fallen flat, with considerable of the vim knocked out of him.

Stinger Sam got out of the crowd and leaped toward the boy again.

This time he had his fists doubled, and it looked as though he had changed his mind about the spanking and meant to do some punching.

He shot out his right fist hard enough to fell a big man, much less a boy weighing a hundred and thirty-five pounds, but it missed by over a foot.

Then there was a quick movement on the part of Wild, and—

Spat!

His fist caught the cowboy squarely on the nose, and, with the blood spurting from his nostrils, down he went on his back.

"I reckon it's pretty near time you started in to give me that spanking you promised," was the cool remark.

"What do you want me to do, thrash you before you do it?"

"Git up an' knock his head off, Sam!" called out one of the man's friends.

"You shet up!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Ther first thing you know you'll git some of ther same kind of medicine your pard is gittin'!"

"Not from you, I won't!" was the angry retort.

Then, before the spectators hardly realized it, Charlie and the advising cowboy were at it hammer and tongs.

The scout knew how to handle himself pretty well, for he had been taught a whole lot by athletic and clever Young Wild West.

He landed a good, straight one on the cowboy's chin and sent him heavily to the ground.

This was the signal for the rest of them to take a hand, and they came for Wild and the scout like a nest of hornets.

Jim Dart then got into it, and in less than thirty seconds all six of them were sprawling on the ground.

Some of the bystanders wanted to interfere as the cowboys were getting upon their feet, but Young Wild West called out, sharply:

"Just leave the galoots to us three! If we can't give them more than they are looking for we deserve to be thrashed, that's all"

Spat—spat! Biff!

The blows from the active trio landed in quick succession, and the cowboys went in every direction.

But such a thing could not last very long.

Suddenly one of the defeated men whipped out his gun.

Wild was right near him and, kicking it out of his hand, he exclaimed:

"The first galoot who tries to shoot will get filled with holes! If you can't fight it out the way you started in, quit!"

To show that he meant what he said, he drew one of the revolvers that hung in his holster and waved the muzzle before the eyes of the defeated gang.

A shout of applause went up from the miners, for the crowd had increased to fully two-score by this time, and they all seemed to be in sympathy with Young Wild West and his partners, though very few knew who they were.

That settled it!

The cowboys knew they had no show with the three, and they quickly gave in.

"It's all over, gents," said Stinger Sam, as he held his hand to a badly swollen eye. "I'll take back what I said about ther spankin'. I can't do it, that's all."

CHAPTER II.

THE DEFEAT OF DEADSHOT PETE.

There was not one of the cowboys who didn't have some kind of mark to make them remember the brief encounter with Young Wild West and his partners, for a few days at least.

They had been badly surprised, and they were now

doing the best thing for them—acknowledging their defeat.

The man who had pulled his gun, however, was not altogether satisfied.

But he did not say anything for a while.

Then, as our three friends started to cross the street with the Chinaman, who had caused all the row, he called out:

"Say, are you Young Wild West, young feller?"

"That is who I happen to be," Wild retorted, as he turned and came to a stop.

"A feller here jest said so, but I couldn't hardly believe it. You've got ther name of bein' ther champion deadshot, too, ain't yer?"

"Well, some say that about me; but I don't go around bragging much about it. I am always willing to shoot against any one who thinks he can shoot good, though."

"That's jest what I want ter hear yer say, then. Now, since yer knocked my gun out of my hand in sich a quick way, an' then swatted me on ther jaw with your fist, I think yer ought ter let me have a chance ter shoot ag'in yer fur ther championship."

"Why, are you a champion, my friend?" Wild asked, as he came on back to the front of the saloon, followed by his partners.

"Yes, I'm ther best shot on ther Two Star Ranch, an' Stinger Sam is ther boss with ther rope. We're a couple of onions what's never been peeled, we are!"

"Oh, I understand. What is your name, please?"

"Deadshot Pete is what they call me on ther Two Star Ranch."

"Oh, I see. Well, Mr. Deadshot Pete, I can't very well refuse to accommodate you, since you make the request. If I am to hold a claim to the championship I must meet all comers until I am defeated. How do you want to shoot, the way you tried to a little while ago?"

"Ther way I tried ter?" the man repeated, looking surprised.

"Yes; you pulled your gun when the little fist fight was going on, and you were going to let me have a lead pill, I know. I had just knocked you down before that, and you meant to bore me for doing it. But it is all right. Just get out in the road here, and you can try your luck on me. I'll have a try at you at the same time, and the one who drops will lose the shooting match."

Deadshot Pete was staggered at this proposition.

The coolness of the boy, alone, was amazing, not to speak of what he said.

"I—I don't want ter shoot that way, Young Wild West," the cowboy answered. "I meant that we would do somethin' fancy in ther way of shootin' at a target."

"Oh. All right, then. Any way you say. I am always ready for anything; I have to be, you know."

"Well, yer may beat me, but I'm a putty good one, if I do say it myself," resumed Deadshot Pete. "I'll show yer a little trick that I don't think yer kin do with a gun."

"That is just what I want to see—something I can't do. If I find that I can't do a thing that somebody else can do, I always make it a point to learn to do it as soon as possible. Just show me your little stunt, and I'll soon tell you whether I can do it or not."

"All right; I'll show yer somethin'."

"Go ahead. If it happens that I can't do it I'll present Sam with a new horsehair lariat and I'll turn the championship over to you."

Confidence is a great thing to have, and Young Wild West certainly had his share of it.

But his varied experience was responsible for this.

Added to this, he was always trying to do difficult things in the line of shooting, and by keeping in constant practice he was able to perform wonderful feats with both the rifle and revolver.

Deadshot Pete now mounted his mustang.

As it has been told that the citizens of Silver Crown were in the habit of seeing cowboys come in and amuse themselves by yelling and shooting as they rode up and down the street, no one seemed a bit surprised.

"Here yer are, Sam," he said, as he tossed his red bandana handkerchief to the man who claimed to be bad when he got riled. "You know what I want yer ter do."

"Right yer are, Pete," was the reply.

Then Sam Stinger selected a stone about the size of an egg from the ground and wrapped it into the handkerchief.

The crowd, including our hero and his partners, looked on with interest.

The cowboy galloped off up the street for about a hundred yards, and then, turning, he came back as fast as the swift mustang could leg it over the dusty ground.

As he neared the spot Stinger Sam threw the handkerchief high in the air, the stone carrying it up.

As it reached the turning point the stone dropped from it and the handkerchief spread out and came fluttering down.

Crack!

Deadshot Pete fired a shot from his revolver, and everybody could see that the handkerchief was hit by the bullet.

Young Wild West smiled.

He ran out and picked up the handkerchief and, holding it up, so all hands could see that there was a hole through it, exclaimed:

"That was a mighty good shot, by jingo!"

But Charlie and Jim knew that he was only joking, for either of them could have done it.

Deadshot Pete came back, his horse at a walk.

"There yer are, Young Wild West!" he said, triumphantly; "do yer think yer kin do that?"

"Well, I'll try pretty hard, anyhow," was the reply. "Let me have your horse, will you? Mine has just been put away in the hotel stable up the street."

"Sartin yer kin have my nag. Did yer ever make sich a shot as that afore?"

"Well, I never did make just such a shot as that."

"If yer kin do it you're a good one, fur ther handkerchief is likely ter fool yer, when you're ridin' good an' hard, like I was jest then."

He dismounted and Wild quickly took his place in the saddle.

"If Mr. Stinger Sam will kindly throw up the handkerchief I'll try and put another hole through it," he said, calmly.

The cowboy referred to nodded his willingness, and

then he went out and picked up the same stone he had used before.

Wild rode away with the mustang and presently came back at full speed.

Unlike his predecessor, he did not have a revolver in his hand.

Stinger Sam looked a bit surprised when he noticed this, but he was ready to let it go in the air, and he sent up the handkerchief in about the same way as he had done before.

Not until the stone left the handkerchief did Wild's hand touch his revolver.

Then it came from the holster as quick as a flash.

The descending handkerchief was directly over his head when he fired, and it was seen to jump.

But that was not all!

Bending back, so that his head almost touched the back of the galloping mustang, our hero fired two more shots in quick succession.

At each report the handkerchief jumped in the air, and a cheer went up that echoed through the mining camp.

Stinger Sam ran out and picked up the handkerchief, but Deadshot Pete shook his head sadly and exclaimed:

"Come on, boys! Ther drinks is on me! I thought I was mighty smart with a gun, but I ain't. Come, Sam!"

Stinger Sam handed the handkerchief to Cheyenne Charlie and followed the defeated man into the saloon, along with the rest of the cowboys.

"There's four holes through ther bugle-wiper, Wild!" cried the scout, as he flaunted it in the breeze. "I knowed yer hit all three times, but ter show them what might not have thought that way that yer did, here she is!"

It was only natural that the men in the crowd should want to see the riddled handkerchief.

Nearly every one of them had it in his hands, and the expressions of admiration and surprise that went up were many.

Our three friends did not go into the saloon, but headed across the street, where the articles they had purchased were waiting for them.

Hop Wah had disappeared by this time, but when they got to the hotel they were stopping at they found him in the barroom entertaining the clerk with a story about his wonderful uncle in China.

He had also managed to confiscate a bottle of liquor, unknown to the clerk.

Hop, by the way, was one of the most clever Chinamen that ever sailed across the Yellow Sea into the blue waters of the Pacific.

He was a sleight-of-hand performer of no mean ability, a professional card sharp—on the American plan—and liked whisky so well that he was not averse to stealing it.

He was quite a practical joker, too, and he was so innocent, withal, that he certainly was a great character.

But he had proved of great assistance to Young Wild West and his friends in trying times, and he had really become a fixture to the party.

But more about him later on.

Our hero and his partners went into the sitting room of the hotel and found the "girls," as they always called them, awaiting for them.

The "girls" consisted of Anna, the wife of the scout,

and Arietta Murdock and Eloise Gardner, the girl sweet-hearts of Young Wild West and Jim Dart.

CHAPTER III.

WILD MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

"What was going on down the street, Wild?" asked Arietta, as she tossed her golden head and looked at her dashing young lover inquiringly.

"Oh, we had a little fist fight, and then I had to shoot against a cowboy champion," was the reply. "Some cowboys started in to drag Hop around the street with a rope, and I thought they were going too far, so I interfered. That started a row, but it came out all right, and no one was seriously hurt."

"But there's a few black eyes in town, though," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, with a chuckle. "Them six galoots must have thought they could fight, I reckon. But they soon found out that they didn't know very much about it."

The girls wanted to hear all about it, so Jim Dart struck up and related just what had happened.

"Well, I am glad that the cowboys took it easy as they did, Wild," Arietta said. "It seems that you make enemies in every camp or two we stop at."

"Well, I reckon there's nothing real bad about those fellows," the boy answered. "Of course, they feel a little sore, physically and mentally; but they are not the sort who look for a chance to shoot a fellow in the dark, or put a knife in him on the sly. I reckon we need have no fear of them, Et."

All three of the girls looked relieved.

They relied on the judgment of Young Wild West in such matters, and if he said it was all right they felt that it must be.

It was near the close of the day when Young Wild West and his friends had arrived at Silver Crown.

The time of year was late in the spring and the weather was balmily and pleasant.

They had never been to the lively, little town before, but as it was a brand new one there was no wonder that they had not.

The "Boss Hotel, Jack Boss, Proprietor," as the sign read, struck them as being the proper place to stop at, and they had no difficulty in obtaining accommodations there.

They did not intend to remain very long in the mining town, so when the pack horses were being unloaded by the two Chinamen in their employ our hero had taken a list of what they were short of in camping supplies, and then he and his two partners had set out for the store to purchase them.

There was nothing like always having the necessities of life on hand. Then they could start out without any delay any time they took a notion to.

Hop had sneaked away to look for a little tanglefoot, as he always called whisky, and he had dropped into the saloon further up the street, and had been the means of causing what has already been described to happen.

Supper was a little late, but they enjoyed it all the more when they sat down to it.

After the meal was over Wild and his partners chatted with the girls a while, and then, seeing that the landlord's wife took kindly to them, they left them in her charge and went out to look around the hustling, little town.

It was not yet dark, but already the lights in the gambling and drinking saloons began to show, for the owners of such places were always trying to draw trade.

Though Silver Crown only had a population of a bare two hundred, there were nearly a dozen saloons and hotels in it.

Of course, there were lots of customers from the surrounding country, for there were ranches scattered about within a radius of fifty miles, and the most of them got their supplies at Silver Crown.

There was a postoffice and a bank there, and these two places gave a business-like aspect to the town.

The bank did quite a business, too, since the smelting works had the majority of the male population employed, and wages were high.

Farmers and ranchmen used it, too, and so did the business men of the place.

As Wild and his partners came to the bank, which was only a short distance from the Boss Hotel, they paused and looked at it.

It was but a shanty structure, to be sure, but it had been built in a more stable way than the rest of the shanties.

The door was wide and of heavy oak, while the two windows in the front gave it a business-like appearance.

The word "Bank" was painted on a sign above the door, and that was all.

But it made no difference whether the bank was given a name or not. It was backed by men who had reputations of being trustworthy and responsible, and that was quite sufficient.

As our friends walked past the building, after sizing it up with no little interest, they saw a man coming out on the street along the side of it, and as he acted in a sneaky way they could not help looking at him sharply.

He was a villainous looking fellow, to say the least, and this was quite enough to make Young Wild West regard him with suspicion.

The fellow crossed the street and went into the saloon Hop had been in when the half a dozen cowboys entered the town.

"Boys, I reckon that galoot is no good," said Wild. "I wonder what he was sneaking out from behind the bank like that for? It strikes me that he might be up to something. I reckon I'll take a walk around there and see what he was doing, if I can. You go on over to the saloon. I'll be there in a few minutes."

"All right, Wild," the scout answered, while Dart gave a nod of assent.

Our hero walked leisurely around the corner of the building.

The shanty next to it was quite close, and there were no windows in that side of it.

As the bank was closed for the day, there was no one to see the boy as he passed on around to the rear.

It was not a very large building, by any means, and

once behind it Wild looked sharply along at the foundation, which was of stone.

The first thing he noticed was that one of the stones appeared to be loose.

Any one would have noticed this if they had been looking sharply.

But the fact that the man had acted in such a sneaky way had aroused the boy's suspicions, as has been stated, and he was really looking to find something wrong.

He felt sure that he had found it, for why should a stone be loosened in the foundation of a bank?"

Wild stepped up to the foundation and, dropping upon his knees, tried to move the stone, which was about a foot square.

It moved readily, and, catching his fingers upon the edges of it, he worked it out slowly until it dropped to the ground.

Pieces of mortar were lying on the ground, too, and this showed that some one had been working the stone loose, no doubt for the purpose of breaking into the bank and relieving it of the funds.

Wild lowered his head and looked into the opening.

The first thing he saw was the handle of a crowbar.

Then a hammer and chisels were brought to light as he reached in the opening.

"Ah!" he muttered. "A plot to rob the bank is on foot, I reckon. Well, this thing has got to stop right where it is. I'll fix that galoot we saw go across the street, for he is one of them, no doubt."

The boy took out all the tools that were inside the opening, and then he put the stone back into position.

A look around showed our hero that he could get around the rear of the shanties adjacent and reach the hotel.

The tools were about all he could carry, but he picked them up and walked off with them.

It was getting dark fast, and no one noticed him as he went along.

In less than a minute he was at the rear of the hotel, and, dropping the tools behind a bush, he walked into the barroom.

Calling the proprietor aside, he said, in a whisper:

"Where can I find the marshal of the town, Mr. Boss?"

"What's that? Why, he is right here now, Mr. West. Do you want to see him?" answered the surprised hotel keeper.

"Yes, I would like to be introduced to him."

"All right. I'll call him. Hey, there, Jack! Come here a minute, will you?"

"Sartin, Jack. What's up?" and the marshal hastened to where the two were standing.

"I want ter introduce you to Young Wild West. Marshal Jack Ryan, shake hands with Young Wild West, ther Champion Deadshot."

"I'm mighty glad ter shake with yer, Young Wild West!" the marshal declared, as he gripped our hero's hand. "I've heard considerable about yer afore yer ever struck Silver Crown; an' jest a minute or two ago I was listenin' ter a friend tell what yer done over at ther Silver Bug Saloon—or in front of it, rather. By jove! but I'm sartinly glad ter know yer!"

"And I am glad to know you, Marshal," answered Wild.

"If you don't mind, we'll go outside a minute. I've got something very important to tell you."

"Is that so? Well, you kin bet your life I'll go out with yer! Come right ahead, my boy."

Wild conducted him outside to the bush where he had put the tools he had found under the bank building.

Much to his surprise, they were not there!

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Marshal, some one must have been watching me. I can't show you what I wanted to."

"What do yer mean, Young Wild West?"

Marshal Jack Ryan looked at the young deadshot in a puzzled way.

Wild took him by the arm and conducted him back into the hotel.

There was no doubt but that the man was beginning to think that he was crazy, but Wild did not mean to do any more talking outside just then, as he felt certain that there were waiting ears to catch what was said.

To a corner of the back room that adjoined the bar they went, and then in a low, calm voice our hero related what he had found at the rear of the bank, after first seeing a villainous looking man sneak across the street.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POKER GAME.

When Charlie and Jim entered the saloon, which was called the "Silver Bug" they found the man they had seen sneak out from the side of the bank standing at the bar, talking with another, who was about as rascally looking as he was himself.

They were conversing in low tones, and they did not appear to notice the entrance of the two.

A bottle and two glasses sat on the bar before them, and both were smoking fresh cigars.

Charlie and Jim did not hardly think that Wild would find anything wrong, and they expected him to soon come in.

As they looked around at the big gathering in the saloon they saw Hop sitting at a table with two miners.

They were just starting to play cards, and seemed to be waiting for somebody to join them.

The fact was that Hop liked to play five-handed when he sat down to a poker game, since he could manipulate the cards better that way, especially at draw poker.

Jim bought a couple of cigars, as he was a stranger in the place, and did not care to stand around without spending something, and then both he and Charlie prepared to take things easy until Wild came.

Presently they saw the two men at the bar swallow the contents of their glasses and then walk over to the table at which Hop and the two miners were sitting.

"What did you say a little while ago, Bill?" asked the one who had come across the street from the bank, addressing one of the men at the table. "Yer wanted me ter play with yer, eh? Is ther heathen goin' ter be in ther game?"

"Yes; he invited us ter play," was the reply. "He's a

little like me, too, fur he thinks a five-handed game is ther best."

"Well, I ain't in ther habit of playin' poker with heathens, but if he's got any money worth while I don't mind."

"Me allee samee gotttee plenty money, so be," spoke up Hop, smiling blandly and pulling a big wad of greenbacks from his pocket.

The two men who had just left the bar exchanged glances, something that Charlie and Jim did not fail to notice.

The money shown by the Chinaman amounted to as much as a thousand dollars, beyond a doubt, for some of the bills turned over and there were those of the hundred denomination to be seen among them.

Hop appeared to be so innocent that the two miners he had induced to sit down with him grinned and acted as though it would be a shame to win his money.

But if they had known as much about the clever Celestial as did the scout and Dart they would not have been so anxious to play with him.

But they were ready to take their first lesson from one who was a master of the art, if it could be called an art.

The other two, whom Charlie and Jim could not help classing as villains, sat down, and then the banker in charge of the card games came around with his box of chips.

The first man to buy took a hundred dollars' worth, and, taking the cue, the others did the same, Hop included.

Of course, some of the chips went to the house, to pay for the use of the table and cards.

That was the rule in the Silver Bug Saloon.

While Charlie and Jim knew that Hop would surely fleece the men he was playing with, providing they kept at it long enough, they did not offer to stop him.

There was no question in their minds but that at least two of them were rascals and, that being the case, they would not interfere, but would wait till Wild came in.

They moved up closer to the table and watched the game.

The cards were cut and one of the miners won the deal.

It did not take our two friends more than half a minute to see that the man dealing was a cheat.

He slipped cards from the bottom of the pack to the other miner each time it came his turn to receive one.

The scout grinned and nudged Dart.

What the players themselves did not seem to notice they could see plainly.

"They're all in ther game ter cheat," was the thought that ran through the mind of Charlie. "Let ther heathen galoot beat 'em, that bein' ther case. He kin skin ther eyes out of ther best of 'em, no matter how sharp they watch him."

The ante was only a dollar, so the game started in rather mildly for a mining camp game of draw poker.

All came in and the cards were called for in the draw.

"Me takee allee samee thlee cards, so be," said Hop, when it came his turn.

He had a pair of jacks to draw to, and when he got another one he had what was considered a pretty fair hand.

But the Chinaman had no idea of winning the pot that time.

However, he raised the betting when it came around to him, and soon all but the man who had received the cards from the bottom of the pack dropped out and he was the only one against him.

This player had drawn but one card, so, from an ordinary standpoint, it would seem that he held a full hand, or a flush, providing he had drawn the card he was looking for.

When there was nearly a hundred dollars on the board, represented in the chips that had been put in the pot, Hop called him.

"Four aces!" came the reply, as the cards were shown.

"Lat velly muchee biggee hand, so be," the Chinaman answered, shaking his head, sadly. "Me have thlee jacks, and me thlinkkee me havee pletty goodee hand, so be."

The miner grinned and took in the chips.

The next to deal was the man our friends had seen come from behind the bank building.

Charlie and Jim soon found out that he was called Glim.

He was a pretty slick one, and the way he handled the cards was quite enough to fool one who was not much acquainted with the game as it was played in those parts.

He dealt to get the best hand himself, and to give two or three others just enough to bait them on.

Hop was one of the others, he catching a full hand this time.

He bet all the chips he had, and was forced to buy a hundred dollars' worth more.

And then Glim, as he was called, drew in the pot on four queens.

It was Hop's turn next, and so awkwardly did he handle the cards that the four he was playing with grinned and exchanged glances.

There was no doubt about it that they all felt that they were going to get hold of some of the money he had shown.

But that was where they were mistaken, as the sequel will prove.

Hop had found out sufficient to make him understand that the four men were all playing hard against him, so it mattered not to him just which one of them suffered the most.

While appearing to be very awkward about it, he had fixed the cards so each of them would draw four of a kind, if they drew as he expected they would.

Glim found himself the possessor of three kings cold.

Each of the others had three of a kind, from queens down to tens.

Hop had placed the four aces where he could draw them all in a heap, no matter how many cards they took.

That was a way he had, his ability to perform sleight-of-hand tricks helping him out.

The ante had been raised to two dollars this time, and when all came in Hop smiled blandly and commenced to deal out the number of cards they asked for in the draw.

They all took two, and they looked at each other as they did so.

One was trying to guess what the others held.

Hop shook his head sadly, and then said he would have to take four cards.

The card he held was nothing more than a trey-spot,

but he was not afraid but that he would get the winning hand.

He drew the four aces of the pack very cleverly, though he did not let on by word, look or sign that he had anything that was worth while.

The betting began to raise as fast as it came to those around the table, and when it came to Hop it cost him forty dollars to meet it.

But he called upon the banker for more chips, and then lifted it twenty-five dollars.

The next man raised it a similar amount, and, to keep it going nicely, the second one did likewise.

Not to be outdone, the third followed suit, and then Glim, who held four kings, bought some more chips and jumped it up a hundred.

Hop shook his head, and for a moment he seemed undecided what he should do.

Then he looked at Glim and said:

"Maybe you allee samee makee bluffee; me makee fifty dollee more, so be."

Glim's friend and the two miners were not going to be driven out any kind of fashion, and they came in and put it up fifty more.

The banker was in great demand then, and when it came around to Hop he called for five hundred dollars' worth of chips.

"Me play dlaw pokee allee samee Melican man," he said; "me velly muchee sportee."

The extra five hundred did the business.

He was called, and there was considerable over a thousand dollars in the pot.

"Me gottee four lillie aces," he said, smiling in his childish way. "Velly goodee hand, so be."

If some one had hit the table with an ax the four men could not have been more surprised.

Before they recovered the clever Chinaman had raked in the chips.

It was just then that Young Wild West came in, followed by the marshal.

Charlie and Jim had been there over fifteen minutes, and they were relieved when they saw our hero come in.

CHAPTER V.

WILD OVERHEARS AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION.

The marshal opened wide his eyes when he heard the story Young Wild West told in a very few words.

"Thunder!" he ejaculated. "No wonder I was mighty puzzled by ther way you acted when you got me out there! I couldn't imagine what you was drivin' at, blamed if I could!"

"Well, the question is: Is there much money in the bank?" Wild asked.

"I reckon there's quite a pile of it there, Young Wild West. It's payday Saturday, which is ther day after to-morrer. I believe every word you say, an' ther quicker we git hold of ther galoot you seen ther better it will be."

"I reckon we had better not interfere with him just now," said Wild, shaking his head. "Some one took the

tools I lugged around from the bank, and he is the one we want to get just now. We'll go over in the saloon I saw the galoot go in, and then we'll soon find out who the other one is. My partners went in the saloon after the man, and you can bet that they have been keeping a watch on him. I want to find the fellow who saw me put the tools down behind the bush. He is the one I want to get hold of."

"Well, Young Wild West, I'm goin' ter leave it ter you. I've heard jest about enough about yer ter make me think that you know your business putty well in games like this."

"All right. But say, Marshal——"

"What is it?"

"Don't take the trouble to call me by my full name; just call me Wild, the same as my friends do. That will suit me better. You just stick to me in this thing, and we'll round up the bank robbers in great shape. I mean what I say, for it is not the first time I have had dealings with such fellows."

"Oh, you kin bet that I'll stick to you, Wild! I know you're all wool an' a yard wide! Jest look how yer made them cowboys dance on their neckties! That must have been great. I wish I had been there ter see it."

"Well, the cowboys are a harmless lot of fellows, but the gang we have got to deal with now is different. It is quite likely that they are the kind who will not stop at anything. The looks of the galoot we saw was enough to make me suspicious right away. Come on! We'll go over to the saloon."

They left the hotel and walked to the Silver Bug Saloon and promptly entered.

Wild's quick eye took in all that was to be seen in a jiffy, and when he noticed that Hop was playing cards with the very man he wanted, and that Charlie and Jim were sitting close by, looking on, he felt satisfied.

The marshal was quite popular with the men of Silver Crown, and he was greeted by many of them in a familiar way.

Neither of the four men at the table with Hop seemed to be the least bit concerned when the two entered, so that gave our hero the opinion that the man had no idea that he was under suspicion in any way.

He called his partners to the bar and called for some cigars.

"This is Jack Ryan, the Town Marshal, boys," he said; and then he introduced Charlie and Jim to him.

"Glad ter meet yer, boys," said Ryan. "Mine is a little whisky, Wild, if yer don't mind."

"Take what you like, Marshal," answered our hero. "I don't drink liquors myself, but I am not the one to tell others what they shall drink. I smoke a cigar now and then, and that is about all the nerve stimulant I take, excepting a cup of coffee every morning. Jim is the same way; but Charlie likes a little tanglefoot occasionally."

The scout grinned at this, and said he guessed he would try a little right then.

Then our hero got down to business and questioned the scout and Jim about the man they had followed into the saloon.

But there was nothing that they could tell him that would lead up to anything.

"Did any one else come in and join him after he came here?" he asked them.

"No," answered Jim. "He was at the bar with the man next to him, on his right, when we entered."

"Well, some one will come in before long, and you can bet on that."

The words were scarcely out of our hero's mouth when a man with a scraggy, black beard came in by the rear door.

He cast a swift look around the room, allowed his gaze to rest upon Wild for the fraction of a second, and then looked sharply at the card table.

"That's the galoot who took the crowbar and the other tools!" our hero exclaimed, under his breath. "I knew it would not be hard to find him. He knows me, too, which shows that he must have followed me when I came away from the bank. It might be, though, that he just happened along in time to see me place the things behind the bush, and, recognizing them, he took them away."

But never once did the young deadshot let the man know he took any interest in him.

Hop had seen our hero enter, of course, and he was expecting that he would be told to quit and give his winnings back.

But Wild questioned Charlie and Jim about the game and learned that all four of the men were cheating for all they knew, so he said nothing.

"However, the game was soon broken up, for the man who had just entered made a sign to Glim and his partner, and they threw down their cards and cashed in what chips they had left.

The two miners seemed to be well satisfied to quit, too, for it had dawned upon them that the Chinaman was a sharper.

Hop got up and cashed in his chips, too, and the rest did likewise.

All told, the Chinaman was about six hundred dollars ahead, so he was well satisfied.

The three men, whom our hero and his partner were now certain were rascals, soon left the saloon.

They went out by the back way, and, telling his partners and the marshal to stay inside, our hero went out the front way and stole softly around the building.

He got to the rear in time to see the trio walking slowly toward a shed.

The one who had come in last was talking very earnestly to the other two, but in such a low tone of voice that our hero could not hear what he said.

Waiting until they reached the shed, Wild made his way to it quickly.

Then he could hear them talking quite plainly, for there were cracks in the boards and the sounds came through plainly.

"Do yer mean ther boy with ther long hair?" one of the men was just saying.

"Yes, I mean him," was the reply. "He done jest what I said he done. He found that a stone was loose in ther foundation, an' he opened it an' took out ther tools we left there last night. I didn't see him do it, but I happened ter be back of ther Boss Hotel, an' I seen him put ther things down behind a pile of bushes. I didn't

know what they was then, but as he come around from behind ther shanty next door in a quiet kind of a way, I made up my mind ter see what he put there. As soon as he went inside I looked. Then I knowed why he had been so quiet-like, boys. I jest grabbed up them tools, an' I never stopped till I got 'em over to ther shanty. Then I thought I'd better let you fellers know about it as soon as possible. Boys, our work has been all fur nothin', ther way it looks. That young galoot is Young Wild West, ther boss of ther deadshots; an' him an' his pards is death on galoots like us. He has found out our game, though I can't understand how he done it."

"Well, I know how, I reckon," answered the man called Glim. "I happened ter be comin' around from behind ther bank jest as ther boy an' his pards was in front of ther buildin'. He must have thought I'd been up ter somethin', an' he's went back there an' took a look around. I don't know what other way he could have found out."

"Glim, yer hadn't ought ter gone there in ther daylight," spoke up the third man.

"Well, it wasn't exactly daylight, was it? I thought it would be all right ter go around there an' see how things was. I never touched a thing there, but as soon as I seen that it was jest as we left it last night I come on back."

"Well, I reckon we've got ter give up gittin' in ther bank that way," the first speaker remarked, in a thoughtful tone of voice, as Wild could tell, though he could not see him."

"Yes; that's right. But there's one thing sartin, boys. We've got ter git that money afore Saturday mornin'. We've made up our minds ter do it, an' we will, too. But ther first thing ter do is ter git rid of this boy they call Young Wild West. That must be done to-night. We'll lay a trap fur him, an' we'll git him an' his pards, an' Jack Ryan, too! It ain't likely that any one else knows anything about this, so it won't be hard ter do. But we'll see ther captain an' tell him all about it. He's smart enough ter fix up a way ter trap 'em, fur he can't be beat at that kind of a game. Things is gittin' desperate, boys. We ain't got no time ter lose about this. If we kin gobble up them four to-night ther chances are that no one else will know a thing about ther stone bein' loose in ther foundation. Come on, an' we'll find ther captain right away."

Wild was much pleased to hear all this, and as the three men left the shed and started off in the darkness he did not hesitate to follow them.

"I may as well find out all there is to it," he muttered, as he kept the men in sight and made his way along. "It isn't likely that they are going very far."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROBBERS DECIDE UPON WHAT TO DO.

The three men Wild was following did not go very far.

About two hundred yards from the rear of the Silver

Bug Saloon they came to a shanty that stood at the edge of a grove of pines.

Other shanties were scattered about, but none were very close to this particular one.

This was the shanty that Glim owned—or he occupied it when in Silver Crown, anyhow, and no one disputed his claim to it.

"Go right in, boys, an' light a lamp," Glim said, as he unlocked the door. "You'll find one on ther table. I'll run an' git ther captain."

The two men did as directed, and then Glim hastened away in the darkness.

He soon reached a shanty that was not more than a hundred yards distant.

There was a bright light shining through the window, and he gave a nod of satisfaction and knocked upon the door.

It was opened by a middle-aged woman, with sinister, dark eyes.

"What's wanting?" she asked, in a tone of voice that showed that she was anything but patient.

"Is Mart in?" Glim asked, wilting before her gaze, for there was something about the woman's eyes that was apt to make a person wince when she looked at him sharply.

"Yes, he's in. But he said he wasn't going out to-night. Here he has brought me away down from Denver to this forsaken place, and I don't mean to be left alone in this shanty every night of my life. Not that I am afraid to stay alone, for I don't care a rap for any man, woman or child. But it gets mighty lonesome with no one to talk to. I know you, Glim. I suppose you had better come in and tell him your business."

She opened the door wider and the villain stepped in.

A tall man, with a dark mustache and goatee, sat at a table, with a checkerboard before him.

It was evident that he had been playing the game with his wife, and that Glim had disturbed them.

"Hello, Cap!" said the villain, smiling at the head of the house. "I'm mighty sorry ter disturb yer, but somethin' has just happened that makes it necessary to."

"What is it, Glim?" queried the man, rising to his feet.

"There! Don't get excited, Mart Mord," spoke up his wife, her eyes flashing. "It is most likely he wants to get you away, so you can sit in some saloon and play cards all night."

"You're mistaken, Mrs. Mord," said Glim, quickly. "I reckon you know ther business we're in, an' what we've planned ter do afore Saturday mornin' comes. It's relat-in' ter that, that's what it is. It has been found out that there was a stone took out of ther foundation of ther bank."

The faces of both the man and woman in the shanty underwent a quick change.

"Oh!" said the woman. "If that's what's ther matter I won't say no more."

"Well, that's what's ther matter, all right," Glim went on to say. "A young galoot which they call Young Wild West has found out that ther bank was goin' ter be robbed, an' he's got the town marshal in tow this very minute."

"What!" gasped Mart Mord, his face the picture of astonishment. "Young Wild West here in Silver Crown?"

"He sartinly is, Cap."

"What brought him here, I wonder?"

"I don't know, Cap. He landed here with his pards an' some gals an' a couple of heathen Chinese, late yesterday afternoon. Didn't yer hear about ther hot time up in front of ther Silver Bug?"

"No; I just got home about an hour ago. I was over to the Canyon, you know."

"Yes, I know. Well, this Young Wild West, as they call him, made it lively fur some cowboys, I kin tell yer. Him an' his two pards licked six of 'em in great shape, an' then ther boy done some fancy shootin' ag'in one of ther cowboys who claimed ter be a champion. If he didn't make that galoot look sick! Why, ther boy kin handle a gun as quick as lightnin', an' he never misses, Cap."

"Yes, I have heard that said of him. He is well known up in Denver, you know. I belonged to a band that he broke up, and, though I was not there at the time it happened, I heard enough to make me believe that he was a very dangerous customer. But I can't understand why he should happen to come to Silver Crown right at this time. I know there is a price on my head for being a bank robber, but I can't see how he could have heard about it. It might be that he has, though, and that he has traced me here. Or it may be that he has dropped in here by chance. But either way, if he knows that there is a plan on foot to rob the bank he will do his level best to stop it, and he will come pretty near getting us, too. Of course, I mean, if he is allowed to live!"

"But he mustn't be allowed ter live, Cap. That's jest what I come ter see yer about. Tom Ravel happened ter see Young Wild West put ther tools we'd been workin' with last night behind some bushes back of ther Boss Hotel, an' when he looked at 'em, an' found that they had been took from under ther bank buildin', he lit out with 'em ter my shanty. Now, ther thing is jest this: There ain't nobody as knows anything about this but Young Wild West an' his pards an' Jack Ryan, ther marshal. They're after us, all right, an' they're sorter work-in' on ther quiet. I don't think they know any of us—I'm sure they don't, in fact—so it oughter be easy fur you ter think of a way ter git 'em in a trap."

"Well, if it is as you say, I think there won't be much trouble about trapping the four of them. But murder is a bad thing to do, Glim. If a man is caught and convicted for murder he's about as good as gone. But if he gets sent up for robbing a bank there's always a chance for him to get out of prison at some time or other. I think the best way to do this would be to catch the four of them and put them somewhere so they can't interfere until after we get the money out of the bank. We had better do it to-night, too. We'll get in and blow the safe with dynamite, and then light out for the Canyon. Then, if Yeung Wild West gets loose and feels like following us, he can do so. He won't find us, you can bet."

"That's right, Cap. I knowed you would soon think of a way ter do it."

The woman, who had been strangely silent, but listening keenly to all that was said, now went out of the shanty with a stealthy step.

"Something is up," said Captain Mart Mord, in a whis-

per. "Jennie has heard something. Leave it to her, Glim; she can do a great deal more than a good many men."

Glim shrugged his shoulders and looked uneasy.

"Do yer think there's any one around ther shanty?" he asked, hoarsely.

"Well, I don't know," was the reply. "But you saw how my wife went out all of a sudden. There must have been some cause for it, or she wouldn't have done that."

"Well, what's goin' ter be done about it?"

Glim was getting decidedly nervous now.

"Sit down and play checkers," was the reply. "If there is any one around spying on us they can't have any reason to think that there is anything wrong here."

But just then the woman came back.

"What was the matter, Jennie, dear?" the captain asked.

"Well, I happened to think that Glim might have been followed here, so I went out to find out," was the reply. "Neither of you thought about anything like that, it seems."

"Did yer see any one?" Glim asked, anxiously.

"No," was the reply. "But there could have been very easily."

"Well, since there ain't no one, we kin feel easy, then," said the villain.

"See here!" said the woman, turning to him and almost piercing him with her dark eyes. "Glim, are you sure that no one knows anything about this business but the four you have named?"

"Well, it looks that way, don't it?"

"Yes; but just tell me all you know about it—just what has happened, I mean. I am going to have a say in this business."

"That's right, Glim," spoke up the captain. "She knows a thing or two, you bet!"

"All right, Mrs. Mord; I'll tell yer all I know about it, which is about as much as any one knows, outside of Young Wild West an' his pards an' Jack Ryan."

The villain then related every point of it, answering the questions she put to him readily.

She seemed to be satisfied.

"Go and lure the four to your shanty, and then make them prisoners and keep them there until the bank is cleaned out," she said. "While they are being looked for you will have a good chance to get the money out of the bank. There is a hundred thousand dollars, mostly in gold, in that safe in the bank, and you know it, too. That must belong to us before daylight comes to-morrow morning!"

The two men nodded.

There was something that was very impressive in the way the woman spoke, and they were much encouraged.

She gathered up the checkers and the board, and then motioned her husband and their visitor to leave.

Two minutes later they were on their way to the shanty where the other two bank robbers had been left.

They had just entered when there was a tearing sound in the rotten roof of the shanty, and then down came a human form in their midst!

"Young Wild West, by jingo!" exclaimed Glim, as he recovered from his surprise and drew a revolver.

Sure enough, it was our hero.

He had been partially stunned by the shock from the fall, too, and before he could recover himself the villains had seized him and taken his weapons from him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VILLAINS GET A STRONG LEAD IN THE GAME.

Wild followed the three villains until they came to the shanty of Glim's.

He got up as close as possible, and he was just in time to see one of them go on and leave two of them there.

He quickly decided to remain there and here what he could, for there was no doubt in his mind that the other would be back, and most likely be accompanied by another man.

They were going to consult the captain, they had said, and our hero wanted to hear what was said.

As the door of the shanty was closed the boy stepped up close to it.

He soon found that there were two windows to the shanty, but both were covered from the inside in such a way that he could not see through them, though a faint light shone through.

"They have got canvas or blankets over the windows," he mused. "I like to see people when I am listening to them talk. I wonder if I can't find a way to look in upon them?"

He went around the little building, treading softly, so there would be no danger of his being discovered.

But there was no opening through which he could peep, and though he could hear the low voices of the two scoundrels, he had no means of seeing them.

The more the daring, young deadshot thought about it the more desirous he became of looking at them.

He went back a few yards from the shanty in the rear, and then he suddenly saw a light shining through a small opening in the roof.

This suggested something right away.

There was a good-sized tree growing close to one end of the shanty and one of the stouter of the limbs hung directly over the roof, at a distance of only a couple of feet from it.

"I reckon I'll climb the tree and get upon the roof," muttered Wild. "If I can get to the hole the light shines through I ought to be able to look right down upon them."

No sooner decided upon than he proceeded to carry the plan into action.

Up the tree he went, using the stealth that he was so capable of, and once upon the limb that branched over the thatched roof of the shanty he started to creep out upon it.

It bent and swayed under his weight, but not sufficiently to touch the roof and make a noise that would attract the attention of those below.

Used to spying upon bad Indians, as he was, it was quite easy for the boy to accomplish his purpose, for those he had to deal with just then could not be compared to shrewd redskins.

He kept on going out upon the limb, and just as the end of it fairly touched the roof he found himself almost directly over the break through which came the light.

Wild could now see the interior of the cabin, and the conversation of the two men below came to his ears quite plainly.

Almost the first objects that his eyes rested upon were the tools he had taken from under the bank building.

He could easily guess that they were the same ones, for they lay in a heap on the floor, and were exactly the same, both in looks and quantity.

"How do yer think it kin be managed, Tom?" Wild heard one of the villains say.

"I don't jest know," was the reply. "But what Mart Mord don't know about sich things ain't worth knowin'. He's ther captain of our gang, which he likes so much ter call his 'bank robber band'; an' he's ther one ter make arrangements fur sich things. Glim won't be long in gittin' him here. His wife might not want him ter come out, since he's been away all day an' she seems ter like ter have him in ther house at night. But he'll come, jest ther same, as soon as he hears what's in ther wind."

"Oh, ther captain will come, all right," the first speaker said, confidently. "She'll be mighty glad ter let him come when she hears what's up. She's as much interested in robbin' ther bank as any of us. She expects ter get a good share of ther hundred thousand, ye know. Then ther captain's goin' ter take her back ter Denver."

"Well, it'll be about ther best strike we've made, I reckon. A hundred thousand dollars ter be divided up among ther four of us ain't so bad, even if ther captain does take a third fur managin' ther business. Two-thirds of a hundred thousand dollars will make over twenty thousand dollars apiece fur ther three of us. I reckon we'll all light out fur some other place as soon as we git it. Ther money is mostly in gold, too, so it will be harder to carry than greenbacks."

"Well, we'll git it, as sure as my name are Tom Ravel!"

"An' we'll spend it, too, as sure as mine is Dick Jones!"

Wild was not a little interested when he heard all this.

But what he wanted to learn the most was how the villains expected to trap him and his partners and the marshal.

That he would learn when the captain came.

As he could not see the two men very well, Wild took the risk of leaving the branch of the tree and resting his weight upon the roof.

There was a slight cracking as he did this, and he saw the men look up.

"Must be startin' ter blow a little outside," said one of them. "I thought it would breeze up a little afore ther night is over. It will be a mighty good thing if it does, too, 'cause if we do happen ter git ther money from the bank safe and light out with it, ther wind will blow ther sand so it will cover our horses' tracks after we git out of ther camp."

"That's right," answered the other. "I jest hope we kin do ther job to-night. But it all depends upon whether or not we kin git Young Wild West an' ther others in our power first. That's got ter be done, or we can't go near ther bank, that's all. With only a sleepy watchman

ter bother with, it will be easy enough, an' we kin git away afore any one sees us."

The cracking of the roof did not alarm our hero any more than it might let his presence become known.

It was natural that his weight should cause the roof to give, and he never once thought that there was any danger of his going through it.

He moved a foot further along and then he could see all that was going on inside the shanty.

The two men were sitting beside a rickety table, on which was a bottle and some glasses and a box containing tobacco.

He knew the box contained tobacco, for he saw one of them in the act of loading his pipe from it.

And it was pretty safe to say that the bottle contained whisky.

The two villains talked on in the same strain for fully ten minutes.

Then the boy on the roof heard footsteps approaching.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, breathing a sight of relief. "I reckon Glim, as they call him, is coming. There are two of them, so the captain must be with him."

Those inside did not hear the footsteps as quickly as he did.

They pricked up their ears when they did hear them, and the one called Dick Jones got up and went to the door.

In came Glim and the captain, and Wild moved his position slightly, so he might get a good view of the latter's face.

The next instant he felt the roof sinking beneath his hands; then came a tearing sound, and down he went!

In vain did he try to clutch something to stay his fall, and, with a thud, he landed on the floor below.

Dazed and confused by the suddenness of it all, he fell an easy victim to the three men, as has been stated.

Glim had certainly acted quickly.

"What do yer think of this?" he exclaimed, in triumph. "Cap, run outside an' see if there's any more of 'em around."

Mord heard and understood.

Out he went, revolver in hand.

But there was no one to be seen or heard.

He went around the shanty, looked on the roof, and then went around again.

Satisfied that the boy had been the only one spying upon them, he came back.

"Now you see how mistaken you were when you thought that Young Wild West did not know who it was that had taken the tools," he said, shaking his head.

"Well, it's all ther better fur us, I reckon," answered Glim, who was standing close to our hero, a revolver pressed against his temple. "We've got ther worst one of ther lot, ain't we?"

"Yes, that's right. How do you feel, young feller? Pretty smart trick you were playing, wasn't it?"

The last remark was addressed to our hero, who had been quickly bound with a rope, so he could not use his hands or feet.

"Well, I had a little bad luck," was the cool retort. "If I had known the roof was as weak as that I shouldn't have put my weight upon it. But it's all right, I reckon."

"You think it is all right, eh? Ha, ha, ha! Well, I guess it is all right; but not in the way you mean, though. The money in the bank safe is going to be ours, and if you are not very careful you will be a dead boy!"

"Oh, I reckon I won't die just yet."

Wild was now quite himself, and as cool as he always was.

He had been slightly stunned by the fall, but it was only momentary.

He was satisfied that the villains did not mean to kill him, but meant to keep him from interfering with them in their work of robbing the bank.

"Now, then, Cap, how are we goin' ter git ther rest of 'em?" asked Glim.

"That will be pretty easy, I think. You and Tom just go back to the saloon. If they are in there, buy a drink, and then come out again right away. They will follow you, as a matter of course. Dick and I will be waiting with a couple of lariats, and if we can't rope them as they come up here I'll give up the business of robbing banks, that's all. Go on right away. Then come back straight to the shanty here."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE TRICK WAS PLAYED.

Wild had not been gone very long when Jim happened to think that he was to get some needles for Eloise at the store.

He had promised her to bring them back in a few minutes, and it just occurred to him at that moment.

"Charlie," he said, "I am going to the store for something, and then I'll run over to the hotel a minute. I'll be right back. If Wild needs me for anything tell him to wait a minute or two."

"All right, Jim," answered the scout. "Go ahead."

Dart hastily left the saloon.

He went to the store and got what he wanted, and then he hastened to the hotel.

Eloise was waiting for him, for she had some sewing to do, and she had no needle of the kind she wanted.

As Jim gave them to her and turned to go Arietta looked at him sharply and said:

"Where is Wild?"

"He's on the track of something, Arietta," was the reply. "I expect to meet him over at the Silver Bug Saloon."

"What is he on the track of?"

"Would-be bank robbers."

"What!"

All three of the girls were greatly surprised, since they had heard nothing of what was going on.

As they were alone just then, Jim delayed returning long enough to tell them.

"Well, I thought it would be strange if we did not run into some kind of an adventure here," said Arietta, shaking her head. "The fight with the cowboys was only a tame affair, and I knew something really startling would have to follow. That is the way it usually is, you know. Bank robbers, eh? Well, that is pretty good. I think

I'll have to take a hand in this game myself. But I'll give you a chance first. Tell Wild I don't want him to stay out very long to-night, for something tells me that he will get into danger if he does."

"All right," Jim replied, and then he went out and hastened back to the saloon.

Charlie and Jack Ryan were almost in the exact spot where he had left them, and there were no signs of Wild or the men he had gone out to follow.

The marshal was talking with the proprietor of the place and another man, but he never once mentioned a thing about the proposed robbery of the bank.

He had decided to let Young Wild West work the thing out to a climax, and then he would be ready to act.

Hop Wah was playing roulette just then, and he was lucky enough to win just after Jim came in.

As he had been out about two hundred dollars on the game, and had won a clean five hundred, he decided to stop.

The banker wanted him to go on, but the clever Chinaman shook his head and said:

"Me allee samee velly muchee smartee; me know when me allee samee gottee 'nough, so be. Velly muchee 'blige."

There was a laugh from those who had been watching him, but there was no one there who did not consider that he was a pretty wise sort of a heathen.

Both Charlie and Jim knew that Hop was pretty sure to take care of himself, so they did not interfere with him.

Just then the cowboys, who had been making the rounds of the town, came in.

When they saw Hop they let out a yell.

But it was not because they meant him any harm.

The lesson they had received at the hands of Young Wild West and his partners had taught them to be a little different toward that particular Chinaman.

They nearly all had black eyes and swollen faces as the result of the fist fight in front of the saloon, but they did not seem to mind this in the least.

The fact was that they had imbibed so much "bug-juice," as they termed it, that they felt no pain from the blows they had received, and, as far as their looks went, they did not care.

"Wow!" yelled Stinger Sam, slamming his fist down upon the bar. "Come here, Heathen! I'm goin' ter treat yer to ther best there is in ther shebang. I don't bear you no grudge, if your boss did lick me like thunder. I'm glad I got licked! I'm a bad cowboy from ther Two Star Ranch, but I know when I hit my head ag'in a tree; I ain't a hog, nor nothin' like one, 'cause I always knows when I've got enough. Landlord, put out medicine fur seven! My money is putty nigh gone, but that don't make no difference; there's plenty more money. Ther printin' presses of ther Government is turnin' it out every day. Money was made ter spend, not only ter work fur! Hooray! Whoopee! Wow!"

Bang!

Down came his heavy fist on the bar again, and a glass that a miner was just pouring some liquor in was upset.

Then the cowboy swept it from the bar and slammed a five-dollar bill on the counter.

"I'm ther bad cowboy from ther Two Star Ranch!" he repeated. "I know that Young Wild West licked me, but you can't, you sour-faced galoot!"

The miner was a little bit angered at what had happened, but a word from the boss of the saloon quieted him almost before he showed it.

The cowboys from the surrounding ranches spent lots of money with him, and the proprietor of the Silver Bug was always looking out to hold his trade.

Besides, he did not care to have his place "shot up" just then, for business was altogether too good for anything like that, even if it was so near payday.

Hop accepted the invitation of Stinger Sam to drink.

He seldom refused such an invitation, if he had his own way about it.

"You velly nicee man, so be," he said, as he lined up alongside the cowboy. "You catchee me with um lope, but me no care."

"Yes, I roped yer all right," was the reply; "an' Young Wild West shot my horsehair rope in two. I didn't like that very much. But thunder! What was I goin' ter do? I said I would spank him, but sayin' things an' doin' 'em is two different conglomerations, as I've found out. Drink, you slant-eyed galoot—drink! You're all wool on both sides, 'cause you're Young Wild West's Chinee. If yer wasn't his Chinee you'd be runnin' around ther sand hills with about a yard less pigtail at this very minute. Whoo-pee!"

Stinger Sam was certainly right in "trim," and though he said his money was pretty nearly gone, he pulled out a couple of five-dollar bills and threw them on the floor.

Out came his gun and he began shooting at them till the chambers were empty.

"There yer are!" he cried, as he picked up the bills, which were pretty well riddled, and placed them on the bar; "treat ther house, landlord, an' we'll call it square!"

The saloon keeper agreed to this, for he knew he could redeem the bills; and, besides, treating the house did not include those sitting at the card tables.

The result was that Stinger Sam paid for really more than was put on the bar.

But he did not stop to consider this. He was on a spree, and the quicker his money was gone the better he would feel.

Though he must have seen Charlie and Jim, he did not address them personally.

They accepted his invitation, however, so there was no chance for him to say anything on that score.

The cowboys then got very noisy.

Some of them wanted to sing and the rest tried to show how loud they could yell.

Our two friends and the marshal stepped outside.

They were all wondering what was keeping Wild so long.

They soon had cause to think that something was wrong, for who should show up but two of the men the young deadshot had followed.

Charlie gave Jim a nudge and whispered:

"Them galoots is up ter somethin'; yer kin bet on it!"

"I wonder where the other fellow is?" Dart answered, looking a little puzzled.

"But where's Wild? That's ther question," spoke up Jack Ryan.

The two villains appeared to be a little uneasy when they went past the trio, and Charlie took pains to watch them as they went to the bar.

They got something to drink as soon as it could be served to them, and then, looking around, as though afraid of being followed, they made for the rear door of the saloon.

"Come on, boys!" whispered the scout. "I reckon we had better see where they go."

He led the way around the building and they were just in time to see the two men striking out across a vacant piece of ground.

All unconscious of the danger that threatened them, they set out to follow the villains.

The two bank robbers certainly played their part well.

As ignorant as they were, they showed great tact, and though they surely knew that they were being followed, they never once seemed to act so.

Straight for the shanty where Young Wild West was a prisoner they made their way, and after them came Charlie, Jim and Ryan.

When they reached the door they paused and looked around through the gloom of the night, and the three crouched behind some bushes and waited.

Then they went inside, and our hero's partners and the marshal got up and tiptoed their way toward the shanty.

It was just then that something happened.

A wire noose encircled Charlie, pinning his arms to his sides, and then around Jim and Ryan went the rope.

Zip!

It tightened quickly and down went all three in a heap!

CHAPTER IX.

HOP FORGETS.

As soon as they saw that Young Wild West's two partners had left the place the cowboys began to get a little more free with Hop.

The Chinaman noticed this right away, and he decided that he had better leave.

It so happened that he took the chance just after Glim and Tom Ravel went out by the back way.

The clever Chinaman left by the rear door, too, and he was just in time to see three forms disappearing in the darkness among the trees and bushes that were scattered about.

But though he had not caught much of a look at them, Hop easily recognized one of them as Cheyenne Charlie.

"Whattée mattee?" he asked himself. "Me have go findee out, so be. Misler Wild and Misler Jim go lookee for somebody, so be; takee man 'long, too. Where Misler Wild?"

Then he thought for a moment and came to the conclusion that there was something that needed his immediate attention.

As the reader is aware, Hop was a very shrewd fellow.

He could figure out things and draw conclusions as

quick as the average person—and a little quicker, probably.

It struck him right away that Charlie, Jim and the marshal were after the two men who had left the saloon but a minute before him.

He at once started after them.

But it so happened that he missed them after he had gone about a hundred yards, and while he was looking around for a sight of them again he suddenly heard cries from off to the right.

They were stifled cries, too, and that certainly meant that something was wrong.

He located the exact direction and hurried away, stepping softly, so he would not be discovered.

The cries had ceased almost immediately, and he had nothing further to guide him for the space of half a minute.

Then his quick ears caught the unmistakable sounds of low voices.

Hop pushed his way through the bushes carefully and came in sight of a shanty.

But that was not all!

He could readily distinguish the forms of several men.

Then he knew what was up.

Some one had been caught and was being hustled into the shanty.

He could not see how many, but he knew there was more than one, however.

"Whattée mattee?" he asked himself. "Lookée allee samee Misler Charlie and Misler Jim fallée in um tlap. Velly muchee stlange, so be. Me havee findee out allee samee pletty quickee."

He took the risk of moving a little closer, but just then the door of the shanty was closed and all was in darkness.

The Celestial did not stop, but moved right along until he was within a few feet of the shanty.

All was still within.

Hop did not know exactly what to do.

If Charlie and Jim were prisoners inside the shanty he would have a small chance of liberating them while their captors were there with them.

He never put up a fight when he accomplished a rescue, but relied solely upon strategy.

The only thing for him to do was to wait and listen.

If he found that the lives of the prisoners were in danger he would have to make a desperate effort to free them; but so long as they were not he could bide his time and wait for a favorable opportunity.

Hop was as daring as he was clever, and it was not long before he was crouching close to the shanty.

He could hear voices, but the tones were so low that he could only catch a word now and then.

But he soon heard enough to know that not only were the three he had followed prisoners inside, but Young Wild West as well.

The Chinaman was puzzled.

He had known of nothing to indicate that Young Wild West and his partners had enemies in the town, and why they had got into such serious trouble so soon after reaching it he could not understand.

He was certain that the cowboys had nothing to do

with it, so that meant that the enemies must have been working secretly.

After listening a while he heard a voice state that the prisoners were not to be harmed in any way, and after the job on hand had been attended to they could get loose the best way they could.

This caused Hop to brighten up considerably.

Young Wild West and the others were in no great danger, after all.

He thought for a minute or two, and then he came to a decision.

"Me allee samee go and tell Missy Alietta, so be," he muttered. "She velly muchee smartee girl, and she know whattée do, so be."

Without any loss of time he set out for the hotel.

But Hop had a weakness, as the reader knows.

He was too fond of tanglefoot by far.

He thought he would go into the saloon, since it was on his way, and get another drink.

Once inside it his attention was attracted by a game of dice that the cowboys had started up.

They were throwing for money, as well as the drinks, and they occupied the biggest part of the bar.

The sight of the money lying there caused Hop to forget his important errand.

"Here!" called out Stinger Sam, as he caught sight of the Celestial. "Got any money, you heathen galoot?"

"Me gottee allee samee plenty money, so be," was the quick reply; and he lost no time in showing his roll.

That was quite enough.

Hop joined in the game.

The drinks came fast, and the first thing he knew he had imbibed altogether too much.

He won money, however, though he did not work the trick dice he always had in his pocket.

The fact was that the Chinaman had been going it a little too strong during the evening, and when it came midnight he staggered into the back room and dropped into a chair, along with several of the cowboys.

Hop went to sleep, all thoughts of Young Wild West and his partners having left him entirely.

By his love for drink he was giving the bank robbers the chance they wanted, and was at the same time leaving his employers and friends in a helpless state of captivity.

Strong drink has caused much in the way of misery and disaster, but the Chinaman could not help it, so it seemed.

Though he was clever and as bright as a dollar, he never could realize that too much whisky was a detriment to him.

Meanwhile the girls at the hotel were in a state of worryment.

When midnight came and Wild and his partners had not got back, they decided that something was wrong.

But they only knew as much as Jim had told them, and that hardly gave a clue to their whereabouts.

However, they managed to make themselves believe that the business they were on kept them out late, and they tried to make the best of it.

Anna was the more cheerful one of the three, and after a while she induced Arietta and Eloise to retire with her.

But it is safe to say that neither of them got much sleep, for they were almost continually listening for the return of the "boys," as they called them.

The night passed on.

It was just before daylight when Arietta arose and made preparations to leave the building.

She could stand it no longer.

Neither Anna nor Eloise tried to dissuade her now, for they knew it would be useless.

"I will find them," she said, shaking her head, decisively. "I will not stop until I do."

They admonished her to be careful, and then the brave girl set out on her mission.

But where was she to go to look for them? That was the question.

She thought of Hop.

He might know something about them.

The hotel, like the saloons of the mining towns, was kept open all night.

Arietta did not hesitate to go to the door of the barroom and ask for Hop.

It so happened that there was a man there, who had lately come from the Silver Bug Saloon.

He quickly informed her that the Chinaman was asleep in the back room of the saloon.

Having decided upon questioning Hop before she went any further, Arietta hurried to the saloon, after thanking her informant for the information he had given her.

She went around to the rear door and, opening it, picked out the sleeping Celestial right away.

"Hop!" she called out, loudly.

The Chinaman awoke with a start.

He rubbed his eyes and, looking at the girl in surprise, exclaimed:

"Whattee mattee, Missy Alietta?"

"Come here; I want you!"

"Allee light!" and being partly sobered by this time, he hurried out of the room after her.

"Hop, where is Wild?"

The Chinaman gave a start, looked frightened for a moment and then answered:

"Me velly solly me gittee dlunk, Missy Alietta; me knowee where Misler Wild is, so be. Um bad Melican mans allee samee gottee in um shanty, so be. Misler Charlie and Misler Jim lere, too; and um marshal lere, too, so be. Me velly solly me gittee dlunk and forgittee!"

CHAPTER X.

THE PRISONERS IN THE SHANTY.

Charlie and Jim certainly had been taken by surprise.

Captain Mart Mord had worked his plans nicely, and, as he remarked when the three captives were hustled into the shanty, it couldn't have turned out any better if it had taken hours to figure out the scheme.

The rope had so entangled the three that they were in the power of the four villains before they could do a thing to free themselves.

The only cries they uttered were those that came from

surprise and consternation, and just as they might have seen fit to shout for help revolvers were pressed against their heads, while they were commanded to remain silent.

It surely was not good policy to disobey the command, for, with their hands bound and deadly weapons covering them, only fools would have done it.

Once into the shanty they were quickly made secure, and then Charlie and Jim looked around and saw Wild sitting in a corner, utterly helpless.

Then, after remarking how easy it had all been accomplished, the captain observed:

"Now, boys, don't talk loud. I hardly think we can look for anybody else to come, but it is better to be as silent about this as possible.

"We have got all those who are supposed to know anything about our business, and that means that we can go ahead without any interference. The watchman will fall an easy victim, I know, for he is not dreaming of such a thing as the bank being robbed."

"When are we goin' ter do it, Cap?" asked Glim, who was delighted at the success of the scheme and was taking care to make Cheyenne Charlie so secure that he could hardly move.

"Just when the day begins to break will be the proper time," was the captain's reply. "Most everybody will be asleep then. Of course, the gambling element will be awake, but they will be so interested in their games that they won't be able to do anything. As soon as the safe is blown open we will get the money and ride away. Our horses must be ready, of course."

"How about your wife, Cap?" asked one of the villains.

"That is the only thing that is bothering me," replied Mord, shaking his head. "I suppose, though, that she will have to go, too, as these fellows will get loose sooner or later, and they have heard enough from us to be able to stop her from leaving. But I know what I'll do! I'll start her off now. One thing about my wife, boys, she is not afraid of anything, and she knows the way, all right. What few belongings we have got can be packed on a horse—those that are really worth anything, I mean. Then she can set out, and by the time we overtake her we'll all be safe. A hundred thousand dollars is worth making a sacrifice for, you know."

"Especially as that's all yer come here fur," added Tom Ravel, with a chuckle.

"That's right. Now, I reckon I'll go and start the mistress off right away."

But before leaving he turned to the captives and remarked:

"Well, what do you fellows think of this game, anyhow? You had no idea that you had Captain Mart Mord, the famous bank robber, to deal with, did you?"

"That's all right," answered Young Wild West, coolly. "You are not done yet. You haven't got the money from the bank yet, in fact. How do you know you will get it?"

"Oh, we'll get it," was the confident reply. "And if you should happen to get loose and start after us it will be a race for gold that you'll be riding; but you'll lose the race, Young Wild West! I know that, for you'll never follow our trail. I flatter myself that I know just what I am doing. I have cleaned out banks in mining towns before, you know."

"That may be. But something tells me that you won't clean out many more. I don't know just why, but I think that way."

Mord laughed.

"It amuses me to hear you talk, Young Wild West," he said. "As if you were not in my power! Why, if I say the word you will never leave this shanty alive!"

"I hope you won't say the word, then," Wild retorted, as coolly as though he was simply talking with a man who was friendly disposed to him, and he was entirely at his liberty.

"Well, murder is something I have never had a hand in yet, and I think I am too old to begin now. So don't worry on that score. I am simply going to leave you in this shanty, along with your friends, and when we get ready to clean out the bank we will do it. It won't take many minutes to do it, either, so you will have to be mighty sharp if you get away in time to take our trail. Of course, if you do happen to overtake us we will fight, and if any of you goes down it will be your own fault. A bank robber is not foolish enough to give up when he has a chance to get away, simply by acting in self-defence."

"I reckon we'll take our chances with you an' your gang if it comes ter fightin'," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up. "Fightin' sich galoots as you are is jest in our line of business."

"Oh, I know that. Don't try to tell me anything about it."

The captain now turned and, after a few whispered words with his men, left the shanty.

Jack Ryan was very much put out by what had happened.

He felt sure that the villains would accomplish their purpose, and if it had not been for the coolness of our hero he would have tried to make some kind of terms with them.

But he stuck it out bravely, for he did not want his companions in trouble to think that he was a coward.

When the leader had gone Tom Ravel sat down before the prisoners, and, fixing his eyes on Wild, said:

"I'd jest like ter have yer answer me one question, Young Wild West."

"Well, what is it?" our hero answered. "Maybe I'll answer it, and maybe I won't."

"How did yer find out that we was goin' ter rob ther blamed old bank, anyhow?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you that much. That fellow there," nodding toward Glim, "acted sort of suspicious to me, and I went around to the rear of the bank after he went into the Silver Bug at dusk last night. I took a good look around, and I wasn't two minutes in finding that one of the stones of the foundation was loose. I got at work right away, and I soon removed the stone. Then I found the tools you've got here under the building. I took them around to the rear of the Boss Hotel and, leaving them there, went in to inquire about the town marshal. You see, I imagined that there was a plan on foot to rob the bank, and I wanted to get at work to prevent it. I haven't any more use for bank robbers than I have for horse thieves, and it is a pleasure to me every

time I can nail them. Well, to let you know all about it, I found Mr. Jack Ryan, who is here with us, and we went outside, so I might show him what I had found. But the tools were gone, so I couldn't show him. But I'll show him now. There they are, Marshal."

The young deadshot nodded toward the bunch of tools lying on the floor as calmly as though everything was all right, and he was glad to be able to convince the man that what he had told him was the truth.

"I see 'em," Ryan answered. "But I reckon it won't do me no good now."

"Well, you are satisfied that what I told you was right, are you not?"

"Oh, sartin I am. I believe what yer said, anyhow. You know that, Wild."

"All right. Now, to finish my story," and, turning to Tom Ravel, he went on:

"We knew that some one had taken the tools, of course, so we lit out for the Silver Bug, where you had gone in, followed by my two partners. It was a pretty sure thing that the galoot who took the tools would come and let you know about it, wasn't it?"

"Maybe it was putty sure," the villain admitted.

"Of course. And that is just what happened. Then what was more probable than that some one should follow you when you left the saloon?"

"I understand it all now. Yer was putty smart, but not quite as smart as yer thought yer was."

"I am compelled to admit that," said Wild. "But if the roof had not broken in with me I reckon it would have been all right."

"That old roof is all right," spoke up Glim. "I'm mighty glad that it was so rotten. But after we got you it was a good scheme of ther captain's ter think about trappin' ther rest ther way he did, wasn't it?"

"I'll have to say that it was, or I will be lying about it."

"Well, layin' all jokin' aside, don't yer think we're in a mighty fair way ter git ther money out of ther bank?" asked Dick Jones, the third man of the party.

"I'll have to say 'yes' to that question, for it certainly does look as though you are going to succeed."

This admission from Young Wild West seemed to please the men immensely.

One of them went outside and took a thorough look around the premises.

Finding nothing in the way of a human being there, he came back.

Then all three began smoking and drinking occasionally from the bottle that was on the table.

But after a while they began to grow drowsy.

"Glim," said Jones, "one of us has got ter stay awake, that's sure. But there ain't no use in all three of us doin' it at one time. S'pose we draw lots ter see who it is ter do it fur ther first hour or so?"

Glim was satisfied, and so was Tom Ravel, so they settled it in short order by drawing matches.

It fell to the lot of the man who had suggested it, and, after making sure that their prisoners were secure, the others lay down on some blankets and were soon snoring

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRITICAL MOMENT DRAWS NEAR.

"Well, what have you done about the business, Mart?" asked the wife of the leader of the bank robbers, as he came back to the shanty.

"Everything is all arranged, my dear," was the reply. "In order to make it a success, from the start, you have got to leave town as soon as possible."

"Good!"

It might seem strange that the woman should answer in this way, but the fact was that she was longing to get back to a gay life in Denver, and the time to leave the little mining town she detested so could not come too quick.

As her husband had remarked to his followers, she was not afraid to ride away alone in the darkness.

She knew the way they meant to go with the plunder when they got it, and she was willing to go.

That part of it was settled quickly, much to the captain's satisfaction.

"Jennie, you haven't got much to take with you, that's one good thing," he said, with a laugh.

"No," she answered, tossing her head. "If I had known that we were going to stay here as long as this we might have had more, though."

"Well, it takes time, you know, to bring about such things. This is the first time there has been so much money in gold in the bank safe. It will be a pretty heavy load to carry, I know; but I think we will be able to manage it, otherwise we would have to get a wagon."

"And then we never would get away," said the woman. "It is all right, Mart; I am not making a word of complaint. One-third of the boodle is to be yours, and that means that I will come in for my share. We will have a swell time up in Denver while the money lasts, and then I suppose you'll have to strike out somewhere else to make another haul."

"That's right, Jennie. Bank robbing is my profession, and there are so many of them that I am bound to keep busy whenever I want to."

The woman now proceeded to gather together what she wished to take with her on the trip through the wild country to the Canyon, which was a small mining camp about ten miles distant. From there she would take the trail that led over the mountains to a good-sized town, where there was a railroad station.

The trail to the Canyon was very sandy, for the most part, and the bank robbers hoped to elude pursuit by their tracks being obliterated by the wind.

Mord had three horses, and one of them was to be used as a pack animal.

He assisted his wife to get ready, and in less than an hour she mounted and, taking the pack horse by the bridle, bade her husband goodby and set out.

"Be sure and come," she added, as she rode away.

"Oh, I'll join you, never fear!" was the reply.

The leader of the bank robbers was very confident, for

he thought he was going to have everything his own way. He sat down in the deserted shanty after she had gone, and as he got to thinking he fell into a doze.

From the doze he dropped off into a sound sleep.

How long he slept with his head lying on the table he did not exactly know, but he was suddenly awakened by hearing some one in the room.

Looking up, he saw Glim standing over him.

"What's ther matter, Cap?" asked the villain. "Have yer been asleep? Come! We've got ter be doin' somethin'. It'll soon be daylight."

"What!" cried Mord, as he sprang to his feet. "Was I fool enough to drop off asleep? Thunder! That is something unusual of me. But I suppose it was all because I felt a little lonely after my wife left, Glim. Anyhow, it is all right. I am glad you came, though."

"Oh, yer kin bet that we wasn't goin' ter let yer sleep all night, Cap. We're itchin' ter git ther money an' git away with it."

"That's right. How are the prisoners getting on?"

"They're all asleep, I reckon, Cap. They seem ter take it mighty easy, though."

"Well, they may as well, I suppose. But they'll be mighty uneasy when they hear the dynamite explosion. Ha, ha, ha! That will hurt Young Wild West as much as though some one shot him."

Glim laughed.

"Maybe it would be a good thing if he did git shot, Cap," he answered.

"No. We won't have anything like that against us. If we get half an hour's start of them they'll never catch us. The wind is blowing pretty good, and the sand will drift."

The two hurried from the shanty now, and around it to a shed.

Mord quickly saddled his horse, and then he went to a barrel that stood outside and got two sticks of dynamite.

"Take these, Glim," he said. "You know enough to be careful how you handle them."

"I reckon I do, Cap," was the reply.

Mord mounted and rode at a walk to the other shanty, his companion walking along with the dynamite.

Reaching it, the captain dismounted and entered.

The prisoners were there in charge of Jones, Tom Ravel having gone to saddle the horses, so they would be ready to start.

The lamp was dimly burning inside the shanty, but the captain could see that the prisoners were awake.

"Well, Young Wild West," said he, smiling confidently, "it will soon be over. I hope you will enjoy yourself here until some one comes along to liberate you."

"I will try and make out," was the reply.

"Well, it is a good thing that you've got a way of taking things cool. If you was one of the excitable kind you might have a fit over this."

The captain laughed as he spoke.

"Come on, Cap; I reckon we'd better hurry a little," spoke up Tom Ravel just then. "It'll be gittin' daylight in a few minutes now."

"All right, Tom," was the reply. "Now, just see if the prisoners are good and fast, and then we'll go. Look out for the dynamite, Glim."

"I've got her all right, Cap," was Glim's reply. "I'm goin' ter lead my nag."

"Let Dick do that; you go ahead with the dynamite and get around behind the bank. Tom will carry the tools and I will attend to the watchman."

It was certainly galling to our hero and his partners to hear all this planning, which was done in such a cool and confident manner.

The men examined the knots in the ropes that bound them, and, after tightening them where they thought they needed it they all went out, putting out the light and closing the door of the shanty after them.

They had taken pains to gather up what they could carry away on horseback in the way of blankets and the things they would need to cook with while in the mountains.

As soon as they were gone Wild made a desperate effort to free himself.

Taking the cue, the rest tried the same thing.

But they found it was no use, for the men who had bound them knew their business perfectly.

"This is what I call mighty tough medicine ter swaller," said the scout, with something like a groan of despair.

"Don't give up yet, Charlie," answered Wild. "There may be a way out of this yet."

"I can't see where it's comin', Wild," was the retort. "In about ten minutes from now we'll hear an explosion an' then we'll know that ther bank safe is blown up. Ther sneakin' galoots won't be long in gittin' away then."

"There is one chance, Charlie."

"What is that?"

"Jim told the girls about the proposed robbery."

"Yes; that's right."

"Well, Arietta will be on hand. See if she don't."

"She might be lookin' fur us, but will she find us? Not till after ther thing is done, most likely."

"I have been expecting to hear from her before this," spoke up Jim. "She said she might take a hand in the game, or something to that effect, when I left."

"Well, if she had known where we were she would have had us out of this before now, I reckon," Charlie observed.

"It isn't likely she would start out until she found out that we did not show up until morning," Jim said, shaking his head, though his partners could not see him, as it was too dark in the shanty for that. "She may start out to look for us after daylight."

Wild was forced to come to the conclusion that Jim was about right.

"Say," said the marshal, dismally, "this is awful bad business. Dan Hull, ther bank president, will be ruined. I'll bet he'd make ther feller rich almost what could stop this business."

"Well, the galoots won't get so very far with their booty, if they do manage to blow up the safe," replied our hero. "We'll get after them, and we'll see if we can't follow the trail. I reckon we have followed just as bad ones before, eh, boys?"

"You bet we have!" exclaimed Dart.

"I ain't afraid about that part of it," the scout retorted.

"But it seems ter be a shame ter let 'em git 'er money in their clutches."

Just then there came a gentle tap on the door.

The four prisoners picked up their cars.

"Hello!" called out Wild, softly.

Then the door opened and a match was lighted.

By the flickering flame cast out by the match the prisoners saw Arietta and Hop standing before them.

"Just in time!" exclaimed our hero. "Boys, I reckon we'll be on hand, after all."

CHAPTER XII.

THE VILLAINS ROB THE BANK.

Hop had lost no time in leading Arietta to the shanty. Though she was angered at him for the way he had acted, she freely forgave him when she beheld the prisoners alive and well.

It was but the work of a moment for Arietta to cut Wild loose.

Then, as he got upon his feet and stretched his cramped limbs, she turned her attention to the rest.

"You have got to hurry," she said. "Don't let them get away with the money, Wild."

"Not if I can help it, Et," was the reply.

"Come on, then."

Our friends gathered up what had been left of their weapons by the villains and went outside.

They were a little stiff at first, but soon they got themselves in shape, and then they started on a run.

It was only a short distance to the bank, but before they were half way there there came a loud explosion.

"They've blown up ther safe!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"That's just what they have done," Wild answered. "Hop, you run ahead and saddle Spitfire. I may want him."

"Allee light, Misler Wild."

The Chinaman was only too glad to be asked to do something.

He felt deeply ashamed of himself for having failed to tell Arietta of his discovery of the night before right away.

Straight for the bank our hero and his companions ran.

It was less than a minute after the explosion when they reached it.

The gray dawn was breaking and objects were distinguishable.

One of the windows of the bank building was badly smashed and the door was open.

Wild leaped forward to the door, revolver in hand.

A mocking laugh sounded from within, and then he stumbled over a prostrate form.

By the time he could get upon his feet the clatter of hoofs sounded from the rear of the building.

The villains had got away.

Wild rushed in, not paying any attention to the body he had stumbled over.

He quickly saw how it was that the bank robbers had made their escape so quickly.

The safe had stood in a corner, and when the dynamite

was used on it a portion of the building was blown away, making a place of egress larger than the regular doorway.

"They have got away, boys!" shouted our hero. "See to the fellow lying on the floor there. He must be the watchman, and maybe he isn't dead."

Wild leaped through the opening and made a bee-line for the stable of the hotel.

He got there just as Hop was leading his horse out.

Only pausing long enough to examine the saddlegirths, Young Wild West swung himself in the saddle.

As he came around to the front of the bank he saw Jim tying a bandage about a man's head.

It was the watchman; he could easily tell that much.

As the boy reined in his steed the clatter of hoofs sounded on the street ahead.

"There they go, Wild!" cried Arietta, pointing to the fleeing bank robbers. "The watchman says they got the money, too. Don't let them get away."

"All right, Et," was the reply, and, putting the sorrel on a gallop, he started in pursuit.

It was just then that a man, hatless and half dressed, appeared from around the corner of a shanty.

It was the president of the bank and the heaviest stockholder in it.

"Catch them, Young Wild West," he shouted, "and twenty-five per cent. of the money is yours!"

The dashing young deadshot heard this, and he shouted back:

"I'll get them, if they can be got."

Jim now left the wounded watchman, who had been dragged out of the building by him, in the charge of Arietta and the president, and after Charlie he went to get the horses.

Then it was that something happened.

A horseman came tearing around the corner of the bank, straight for Arietta.

Before she could get out of the way the horse made a swerve, and then an arm encircled her waist and she was drawn upon the back of the steed!

It was surely a daring performance, but when we say that it was Mart Mord who did it the reader will not be much surprised.

The leader of the bank robbers realized that they would surely get caught unless something could be done quickly.

As he was riding away, and heard the hoofbeats of Young Wild West's horse in hot pursuit, he thought of a plan which he thought would save them.

"Keep right on, boys!" he called out. "I am going back and get that girl. With her in our possession they won't dare to chase us up too close. I will threaten to take her life unless they stop, and you can bet that we will come pretty close to winning out, too!"

Back he went, and in less than a minute he had accomplished his purpose.

Arietta uttered a scream, which was heard by Charlene Charlie and Jim Dart.

But by this time the whole town was astir.

The cowboys, who had been aroused by the explosion, now came out with their horses.

Then the scout and Dart came along.

The president of the bank and the watchman quickly let them know what had happened to the girl.

"It was Mart Mord who had her!" the latter exclaimed. "He is the one who knocked me down when they came in the bank, too. You must hurry, if you want to save the girl and the money. Mord has got one of the fastest horses in these parts."

But neither Charlie nor Jim heard what he said.

Already they were on the trail, and riding close behind them were the six cowboys.

Meanwhile Arietta was being borne along with the speed of the wind.

As the watchman had said, Mord had a very fast horse.

The girl had not expected anything like that to happen.

Consequently she fell an easy victim to the quick-thinking leader of the bank robbers.

As he swung her across the horse in front of him he let the reins drop and swung the end of a rope around her body.

Another quick turn and her arms were pinned to her sides.

"Easy, young lady!" he said, persuasively. "You will not be harmed, providing you do as you are told. We have got the money, and we mean to get away with it. You must be the means to allow us to do it. I am a desperate man, remember!"

"You are a scoundrel!" cried the girl, as she made an effort to free herself and drop to the ground.

But he quickly swung the rope around her for another turn, and then she was hard and fast.

Then Arietta let out a scream for help, for the second time.

"That's right," said Mord. "I want them to know that I have got you. Young Wild West will turn to look for you, and then my pards will get away. They have got the money; I haven't a dollar of it. Ha, ha, ha! My scheme is working to perfection, as quick as I was in making it up."

The villain now guided the horse off to the right.

He had only been at Silver Crown a few days, but in that time he had made a study of the surrounding country.

He knew just which way to go in order to elude his pursuers.

If he followed the trail his partners took he might come upon Young Wild West, too, and that was why he swung off to the right.

It was growing lighter every minute now, and the yellow streaks that ran athwart the eastern sky denoted the approach of a clear, bright day.

A gentle wind was blowing from the Southwest, and as it grew lighter it increased.

But it was nothing like a gale, so if the villains had depended upon it to drift the sand and conceal the prints of their horses' hoofs they would have been disappointed.

On rode the bank robber, holding his fair prisoner firmly upon the horse.

Mord was now certain that Young Wild West must have heard the scream of the girl, and he was hoping that he had turned back to find out what the trouble was.

It was a desperate game he was playing, for there was a hundred thousand dollars at stake.

"If they only knew enough to take to the ravine," he thought. "Then the boy might make a mistake and follow the trail of Jennie. It is about the only chance we've got."

He covered half a mile, and then he reached the ravine he had in mind.

Then it was that an exclamation of satisfaction escaped his lips.

The fresh prints of horses' hoofs showed plainly in the damp soil.

Arietta, seeing how elated he was screamed at the top of her voice:

"Wild! Wild! Save me!"

"Shut up!" exclaimed the villain, fiercely. "We are going to get away with the money, or you will die!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT LUCK OF THE CHINAMAN.

Hop Wah felt so badly over what his negligence had caused that he tried hard to think of something he could do to make amends for it.

He got the horses of Charlie and Jim ready and turned them over to them.

Then, when he heard the shriek of Arietta, he hastened to saddle his own horse.

"Me havee workee velly muchee hard now, so be," he muttered. "Me velly muchee foolee. Whattee mattee with Missy Alietta? Me havee findee outee pletty quickee, so be."

When he came riding down the street to the front of the bank he found a crowd gathered there.

All those who owned horses, however, were joining in the pursuit of the robbers.

But it happened that there were not many horses in the town, so there were not so many employed in the pursuit, after all.

But there were more than enough, for half a dozen could settle the villains, if they could only overtake them.

Anna and Eloise came running to the spot just then.

"What has happened, Hop?" cried the scout's wife. "Where is Arietta?"

Hop shook his head.

"Me no knowee, Missy Anna," he answered.

"The girl was seized and carried away by one of the bank robbers, after we thought they had all gone," said the bank president, who was so excited over what had happened that he had failed to go to his home and finish making his toilet.

He was barefooted and in his shirt sleeves, and without a hat.

His eyes were wild-looking, for the loss of the money the bank safe had held meant ruin to him.

"Lat velly stlange," mused Hop, when he heard what the man said. "Me havee lide along and see whattee me can do, so be."

"Go and help find her, Hop!" exclaimed Eloise.

"Allee light," was the reply. "If Misler Wild and um partners no findee, me findee, allee samee."

He galloped away, taking the trail the rest had followed.

Hop had learned many things from Young Wild West and his partners since he had been with them.

He knew that he would not overtake the rest of the pursuers if he kept going the same way they did, so he decided to make a short cut of it.

Just which way to turn he did not know; but it was a matter of luck.

He decided to go to the right, hoping that the villains might have turned that way after they got further along.

Luckily for him, he turned in the right direction.

But he did not know that he had, and he kept right on, riding fast when the nature of the land would permit it and slowing down when he found his way barred by obstacles.

The sun came up and started on its journey to the zenith, and the Chinaman, bent on doing something to offset the mistake he had made the night before, rode on.

As yet he had not struck anything that looked like a trail, but, ever hopeful, he continued on.

The fact was that the Chinaman had selected a route that would take him to the trail that led from the Canyon—the one the captain's wife was to take, after she got to that place—and he was cutting off something like eight miles.

As much as he had studied the country about the mining town, Mord had not thought of doing this.

For two full hours Hop kept on, and then he began to think that he had made a bad mistake, and was nowhere near the fugitives and the captive girl.

But he did not grow disheartened, however.

That was not his way.

When another hour passed he came to a halt, and while his horse was resting he climbed a tree to take a look around.

Before he reached the top his eyes caught sight of something that made him much excited.

Not more than two hundred yards further on was a beaten trail, and near a horse that was down was a woman!

The Chinaman's eyes dilated, and he drew a long breath.

"Whattee mattee, anyhow?" he asked himself. "Me no undelstand, so be! Me havee findee out."

Down the tree he came and, mounting his horse, he rode slowly to the trail.

The woman arose to her feet as he came in view.

There was an expression of alarm on her face, but when she saw that it was nothing more than a common Chinaman she looked relieved.

The woman was no other than the wife of Mord.

She had met with hard luck, since the horse had stumbled and broken a foreleg, while the one that carried her belongings had taken fright and galloped along the trail.

After vainly endeavoring to catch the animal, she came back to the wounded steed and sat down to wait for her husband.

She had been there for some hours now, but there had been nothing else for her to do, she thought.

"Hello, Missy Melican Lady!" called out Hop, cheerily. "Whattee mattee?"

"Where do you come from?" asked the bank robber's wife, ignoring his question.

"Me come ffrom China," was the innocent reply.

"Where did you come from just now, I mean?"

"Me comee ffrom Silver Clown justee now, so be."

"Ah!"

"Me lookee for um bank lobbbers, allee samee," went on Hop, glibly, for he did not know that the woman was any way connected with the villains.

"Oh, you are looking for the bank robbers, are you? Did they get the money from the bank?"

Then it was that Hop's suspicions were aroused.

But he was quite equal to the occasion, however.

"Yes, Missy Melican Lady, um bank lobbbers allee samee stealee um hundled thousand dollee ffrom um bank. Len um boss of um bank lobbbers, he catchee um Melican girl and he takee her with him."

"What's that you say?" cried the woman, her eyes blazing with anger.

"Lat allee samee velly true," declared Hop, as he slid from the back of his horse.

"Do you mean to tell me that my husband carried off a girl when he left Silver Crown?" demanded the woman, forgetting herself in her excitement.

"Lat light, allee samee. Your husband wantee Young Wild West's sweetheart, so he could takee her away and allee samee mally her."

The clever Chinaman had thought quickly, and he was going to make trouble between man and wife, if they ever happened to get together again.

But, at the same time, he was confident that he had struck it just right, for was it not probable that the woman was waiting for her husband and his gang?"

"You velly nicee lady," ventured Hop, after a rather lengthy pause. "Whattée mattee with you horse, so be?"

"Can't you see what is the matter with him?" cried the woman, almost savagely. "He's got a broken leg."

"Lat too bad, allee samee."

"See here!" exclaimed the bank robber's wife, sternly. "I want you to tell me all about my husband—I mean Mart Mord, the leader of the gang that robbed the bank. Now, go on and tell me. If you don't I will shoot you!"

She tapped the butt of a revolver that was disclosed from a pocket of her skirt.

As quick as a flash the Chinaman drew his big six-shooter from under his flapping coat.

He seldom had the weapon loaded with bullets, for he did not claim to be much on the shoot; but he had a way of putting in colored fire, so that when he fired those who had never seen him in action would be surprised.

Just now the old-fashioned pistol was loaded with gunpowder and three other powders that would each make a trail of fire of a different color when it was discharged.

The six chambers contained a load, and, if emptied in quick succession, the streams of fire that would come from the muzzle would alternate with red, blue and green.

But this the woman did not know.

She thought she had struck a Chinaman who was not half as innocent as he looked to be.

She was perfectly right on this, as the reader knows, but not in the way she took it just then.

"You no shootee me," said Hop, as he leveled the re-

volver at her. "Me shootee you if you no allee samee be-havee!"

"Don't shoot!" she exclaimed, in alarm. "But tell me about the bank robbers, and—and the girl my husband carried away with him."

"Allee light, len."

Then Hop lowered his revolver and related to her a story that was partly true and partly exaggerated.

He took pains to impress it upon her that Mord wanted the girl, so he might take her to a preacher and be married, however.

"Me takee velly muchee shortee cut, so be," he added. "Young Wild West lide close after um thlee lobbbers, and the captain, he comee backee and gittee um girl. He lide along after Young Wild West, and Young Wild West's partners and um cowboys lide after him. Me lide after lem; but me takee short cut and gittee here allee samee first. Me velly smartee Chineese."

"Well, they are bound to come this way, unless—unless Mart really means to take the girl to Denver, instead of me!" exclaimed the woman. "Anyhow, I will wait here, and if he comes with the girl I will shoot both of them!"

CHAPTER XIV.

HOP AND ARIETTA ARE LEFT WITHOUT HORSES.

"You no shootee Missy Alietta," said Hop, calmly; "she no helpee if um bank lobber cally her off; she no wantee comee, so be."

"That may be, too," answered the jealous woman. "But I'll kill her, too, just the same!"

"You killee Missy Alietta and me allee samee killee you!"

The big revolver was put on a line with her breast in a twinkling, and the bank robber's wife wilted.

Hop was thinking hard when he was not talking.

He felt that he had performed a master stroke in taking the short cut, for he was certain that the robbers would be along pretty soon.

Just how to manage things when they came, he did not know.

He soon came to the conclusion, however, that the best thing to do was to relieve the woman of the weapons she had.

Stepping up close to her, and keeping his revolver pointed at her, he said:

"Me havee takee you gun, Missy Melican Lady."

She did not try to resist, so he took the weapon from her pocket.

"You gottee some more?" he asked.

She made no reply, so he took it for granted that she had.

"You takee um knife and allee samee puttee on um glound!" Hop commanded.

This she did, promptly, too.

"Now um other pistol, so be."

The woman hesitated and then drew another revolver from beneath the folds of her skirt and tossed it to the ground beside the Chinaman.

"There!" she exclaimed. "Now let me be, will you?"

"Lat allee light," answered Hop, as he picked the weapons up and put them in his pocket. "You velly nicee Melican lady."

But he forgot that he had a shrewd woman to deal with, and, while he stood there toying with his own revolver, she stepped over close to his horse.

It just happened that the wounded horse made an effort to get up at that moment, and the Chinaman's attention was called to it.

Taking advantage of this, the woman sprang for Hop's horse and, with a desperate effort, threw herself upon its back.

It was all in her favor just then, for the horse happened to be standing in a hollow that was a foot or more below where she had been standing.

A sharp command from her and away went the Chinaman's steed, she holding the bridle rein and urging it to the top of its speed.

She took the back trail, too, showing that she meant to meet her deceiving husband, if she possibly could.

Bang!

Hop was so surprised that he turned his revolver and fired in the air.

A streak of red fire shot from the muzzle and, seeing the glare, the desperate woman rode all the faster.

Bang!

This time the pistol was turned toward her, but the flame did not anywhere near reach her.

Hop looked very much disgusted.

"Me allee samee fool!" he exclaimed, for the second time that morning.

But there was no help for it now.

There was no use in trying to catch the horse.

He knew that well enough, so he sat down and tried to gather himself together.

Meanwhile the jealous woman continued on her way.

But she had not gone far when she heard the clatter of hoofs up the trail.

"They are coming!" she exclaimed. "Now I will soon see whether the Chinaman told the truth or not."

Ten seconds later three horsemen came in view.

They were the bank robbers.

The captain's wife came to a halt.

When the villains saw her they were not much surprised, though they had expected to overtake her further along the trail.

"Where is Mart?" she demanded, as they slackened their pace.

"He's comin'," was the reply. "He ain't far behind. We seen him about ten minutes ago, an' then he was only half a mile away. He's got a gal with him, an' that makes him a little slower, even though his horse is faster than ours."

It was Glim who gave her this information.

"Stop!" she commanded, as they were riding by. "I want to know what my husband is doing with a girl."

"He went back an' got her, so we could have her ter keep our pursuers back," was Glim's reply. "They're after us hot, only we managed ter throw 'em off ther trail. But they'll be along in less than half an hour, most like-

ly. If we keep ther gal we kin dictate terms with 'em, so ther captain said."

"He didn't catch her just for that alone."

The three villains looked surprised when the woman said this.

"What in thunder do yer think he got her fur, then?" demanded Tom Ravel, impatiently.

"Well, a Chinaman told me a few minutes ago that he wanted to marry her."

"A Chineese told yer that?"

All three were more surprised than ever.

"Yes, a Chinaman, who is looking for the bank robbers. He took my weapons from me, but I managed to fool him and take his horse and ride away. He is back there about half a mile with my horse, which is down with a broken leg."

"How could he have got this far?" Glim asked, looking at his two companions and shaking his head, doubtfully. "It must be ther galoot we was playing poker with last night, Tom."

"Yes," was the reply. "No other heathen could do a thing like that."

They had brought their steeds to a walk now, and were riding along with the captain's wife, who appeared to be a little relieved at the explanation she had received from them.

"So you think Mart is not in love with the girl he has got, then?" she asked.

"In love with her!" echoed Glim. "Why, you oughter know that he thinks ther whole world of you. I've heard him say that more'n once, too. He got ther gal 'cause we was catched jest as we got ther money, an' he thought it would be ther only sure way of gittin' away. They won't dare ter shoot at us, so long as we've got ther gal; yer ought ter know that, Mrs. Mord."

"That is true," she answered, becoming pacified. "But is the girl very pretty?"

"We don't know. We hardly seen her. But I reckon it must be Young Wild West's gal. She must have found 'em an' let 'em loose from ther shanty about ther time we was gittin' ready ter blow up ther safe. It was either her or ther Chineese what done it, 'cause they never could have got away themselves."

"Well, the Chinaman told me it was he and the girl who let them loose. I know all about that."

"Oh, that explains that much, then. But we've got ther money, an' that's one thing. If Young Wild West follers us he'll have a hot old time afore he gits us, I reckon."

They rode on, and as they neared the spot where the Chinaman had been left with the wounded horse they slowed down to a walk.

"We must be careful now," said the woman. "That Chinaman is a dangerous fellow. He shot twice at me, and each time a streak of fire came from his revolver."

"Oh, we'll soon catch ther galoot," Glim retorted, confidently.

The next minute they came in sight of the spot the woman had made her desperate escape from.

The horse was there, but Hop was nowhere to be seen.

"He must be hiding around somewhere," the woman whispered. "Look out for him."

"We'll look out fur him, all right," said Glim, significantly. "I reckon there's goin' ter be a dead heathen, if I set eyes on him. Ther captain don't believe in killin', but I can't help that. We ain't goin' ter let no heathen Chinees stop us from gittin' away with this boodle."

They rode up and dismounted, and then, after finding that the horse would be of no further use, Glim shot it and put it out of misery.

It was just then that Mord came in sight.

He had caught up with the rest at last.

Holding Arietta, the same as he had been doing all the way from Silver Crown, he galloped his horse to the spot.

"What! You here, Jennie?" he exclaimed, as he beheld his wife with the men.

"Yes, I am here," was the reply. "What are you doing with that girl, Mart Mord?"

"I caught her and brought her along, so we might be enabled to get away, dear. What! You are not jealous, I hope?"

"No, Mart; I ain't jealous," and the eyes of the woman lighted up.

Arietta was allowed to drop to the ground.

The fact was that the horses were about played out, for they had been continually on the go, and many miles had been covered.

This was more so with the captain's, since it had carried a double burden.

Tom Ravel and Dick Jones had gone in search of the Chinaman, for they knew he must be somewhere in hiding.

But, hearing the captain talking, they soon gave up the search and came back.

It did not take long for Mord to hear what had happened to his wife.

"Pretty clever out of the heathen, I must say," he remarked. "But you got the best of him, all right, Jennie. That shows how brave and clever you are."

"Yes, but had we not better be going, Mart?" she answered. "Suppose Young Wild West comes along?"

"Oh, there ain't no danger of his comin', fur he has followed your trail to the gulch. If he had not done so he would have been here before this."

"Or he would have had us, else we'd have got him," added Glim, shrugging his shoulders.

Arietta was taking it coolly, for one in such a position as she was.

After the first fright of it she had become calm, and she was now waiting for her young lover to appear.

The fact that Hop was somewhere in the vicinity gave her much hope, too, for she knew that he was capable of accomplishing great things.

The villains rested their horses for fully ten minutes.

Then the captain looked at his men and remarked:

"It looks to me as though Young Wild West's race for gold is going to prove a failure. I hardly think it necessary to take the girl any further, boys. If he has gone all the way to the Canyon he won't get along here in an hour yet; and by that time we will have thrown him off the track completely. I think the hundred thousand is safe now."

"Leave the girl right here," said his wife. "Let her find the Chinaman, and then the two of them can walk

back to Silver Crown. If they keep at it they ought to get there by sunset."

She flashed a glance at the helpless girl as she said this, and Arietta could easily tell that she did not like her.

But the girl did not care anything for this.

The fact that she was to be left there was enough to make her feel delighted, even though she was without a horse.

"Come on!" exclaimed the captain, as he swung himself in the saddle. "Let the Chinaman find her and cut her loose."

The other three villains laughed and mounted their horses.

The wife of the captain had not taken the trouble to dismount, so she smiled sardonically at the girl, who was standing on the ground, with the rope about her body, so that it held her arms to her sides, and rode on.

The clatter of the hoofs gradually died away in the distance, Arietta keeping her gaze fixed in the direction they had gone.

Then, all of a sudden, she heard a noise in a tree almost over her head.

"Hello, Missy Arlietta!" said a voice. "Me comee down and allee samee cut you loose, so be."

"Oh, Hop!" she exclaimed. "I am glad you are here."

"Me velly muchee glad, too, so be, Missy Alietta."

Then the clever Chinaman dropped from the tree and stood smiling and bowing before her.

Out came his ready knife and she was soon at liberty.

"Now, Hop, if Wild would only come!" she said, anxiously. "If he don't come pretty soon the villains will get away with the money."

"He comee velly soon now," answered Hop. "Hello! Hip hi! Me hear um horsee comee now. Lat Spitfire, me allee samee bet!"

Sure enough, the clatter of hoofs could be heard, and the next minute a horse and rider appeared.

It was Young Wild West!

CHAPTER XV.

"THE FINISH IS NEAR."

Young Wild West had passed the ravine, as the lead of the bank robbers thought he might.

In the gloom of the early morning he had only noticed the tracks that led straight ahead, and he had followed the trail made by the woman with her two horses.

But as it grew lighter, and the boy had covered about three miles out of his way, he suddenly came to the conclusion that only two horses had passed that way, and that they had not been going very fast, either.

If it had not been that the prints of the hoofs convinced him of the latter he might have gone much further before discovering his mistake.

Wild quickly dismounted.

"I have been fooled, I reckon," he said. "The horses that passed this way lately were hardly off a walk. I reckon I'll ride back and look for the trail of the robbers. This is too bad!"

He turned back, and in less than five minutes he met the six cowboys, who were following his trail, depending upon it to take them right.

"Hello, boys!" he called out. "I reckon we are on the wrong trail. We must get back and find which way the galoots went."

"Is that right?" asked Stinger Sam, who was leading the cowboys. "Well, that's a blamed shame, then. They'll git so much of a start on us that they'll git away, if we don't look out. But it is mighty sure that ther captain went some other way, anyhow, fur he had ther gal."

"The girl, you say?" queried our hero. "I heard a scream, but I was not sure that it was one of distress. Do you mean to say that the leader of the bank robbers carried off the girl who was in front of the bank?"

"That's jest what he done, 'cordin' ter what ther bank man an' ther watchman said," answered Stinger Sam. "We thought yer must have heard it, sure, when she yelled. That was what hurried us ter git our horses, wasn't it, boys?"

"That's right!" came the reply from the rest of the cowboys.

Wild was amazed.

But he did not lose his head, not one bit.

"Come on, boys!" he exclaimed. "The bank president told me I could have one-fourth of the stolen money, if I got it back, and I mean to get it. This is not only a race for gold, but it is a race to save my sweetheart."

Just then Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart appeared on the scene.

Jim had taken it for granted that Hop had buckled the saddlegirths properly, and the result had been that the saddle came off and he was thrown.

The scout had remained behind to help him, while the cowboys rode on and met our hero as he was coming back.

Jim was all right now, however, so they all rode back at high speed.

When they at length came to the ravine they saw how they had been fooled.

"Never mind," said our hero, coolly. "Here goes for my race for gold!"

The sorrel stallion responded to a touch from his heels, and then darted away like the wind.

There was no use in either the boy's partners or the cowboys trying to keep up with Spitfire when he once got at his best.

They were outdistanced in no time, and soon Young Wild West was going it alone.

Never in his life had he ridden faster when no one was pursuing him, but our hero felt that his sweetheart was in danger, and that spurred him on.

Through the ravine and out upon the trail he went, and once upon the latter he saw that the fresh hoofprints showed plainly.

The sorrel seemed to be almost tireless, for he needed no urging.

It was possible that the intelligent animal realized how important the race was.

Virtually it was a race against time now, for, by being thrown off the track, Wild was almost half an hour behind them.

But some of this had been made up by the swift riding

he had done, and he hoped to overtake the scoundrels by noon.

He was much closer to them than he had any idea of, however, as the reader knows.

After what seemed a long time Wild suddenly saw something ahead of him that made his heart jump.

It was the flutter of a female garment.

The next instant he beheld his sweetheart and Hop standing as though waiting for him.

When this occurred his partners and the cowboys were easily a quarter of a mile behind him.

Wild could not help stopping.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "are you all right, Et?"

"Yes, Wild," the brave girl answered, as she ran to him and caught him by the hand. "I had a long ride of it, with my hands tied to my sides. But the leader of the bank robbers thought he had better drop me, so he did, and but a few minutes ago, at that."

"A few minutes ago!" echoed the boy. "Am I as close to them as that?"

"You can afford to give Spitfire a blow, and then catch them in fifteen minutes, Wild."

Arietta spoke as though she knew what she was talking about, and Wild never once doubted her judgment as being correct.

"Hop, how in the world did you get here?" he asked, as he turned to the Chinaman, who was smiling like a basket of chips, as the saying goes.

"Me takee velly muchee short cut, so be," was the reply.

But Arietta interrupted him, and in a few words she related the substance of what had taken place, finishing just as Wild's partners and the cowboys came in sight.

Our hero did not wait very long.

He was bent upon capturing the bank robbers, and the quicker he got to them the sooner it would be over.

He had dismounted while he was giving the sorrel a chance to recover his wind, but he quickly threw himself in the saddle again and started off.

"Come on, boys!" he called out. "We'll soon have them now. Arietta says they have just gone on. The race for gold is drawing to a finish, I reckon."

A cheer was the answer, and then they dashed after the daring young deadshot.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

The trail led through a woods now, but it was not a dense one, so the speed could be kept up pretty well.

Spitfire was steaming, but he never showed any signs of lagging.

On, on he went, and at length, as the end of the timber patch was reached, Wild caught sight of the fugitive bank robbers and the woman.

They were ascending a hill less than a quarter of a mile away.

Wild reined in his horse and cast a swift glance around at the country.

He saw a way to get ahead of the robbers and cut them off, so he determined to do it.

Keeping within the woods, he rode along at a slower

pace, and gradually his partners and the cowboys gained upon him.

"I reckon we've got them, boys," said Wild. "They just went up the hill below there. Come on; we'll cut them off, and then give them a surprise."

They were all willing, as can readily be supposed.

Keeping but a short distance ahead of them, Wild led the way up the hill, and then turned sharply to the left.

Two minutes later he brought his horse to a halt.

He could hear the villains coming.

The rest came to a halt, too.

Nearer came the sounds, and presently they could see the four men and the woman riding along through the woods.

In less than a minute the climax would be reached.

"Boys," said Wild, in a whisper, "I reckon the race for gold is over, anyhow. It is for us to capture the galoots now."

"It's all over but ther shoutin'," spoke up one of the cowboys. "An' yer kin bet we'll do that, good an' hard, when ther times comes. I'm jest itchin' ter let out a yell."

"All right. You fellows get your mouths ready, and when I say the word yell your loudest. I reckon that will sort of surprise the galoots. Keep back here, so they can't see you till they get right here."

The cowboys got ready.

Along came the unsuspecting villains.

Just as they were abreast of them, and only about twenty feet from where his horse was standing, Wild gave the word.

A yell split the air and echoed over the hillside.

Captain Mord and his party came to an abrupt halt.

"Hands up, you sneaking coyotes!" commanded Young Wild West, as he rode out before them, a revolver in each hand. "The jig is up, and the race is over. I win!"

Before they could hardly understand what the yell signified the bank robbers were almost surrounded.

Up went their hands, all but the woman.

"Shoot 'em, Mart!" she screamed. "Don't give in to 'em. Think of what will become of us if you do! We'll all go to prison!"

But Mart was wise enough to refrain from taking her advice.

He saw the determined expression of Young Wild West's face, and he knew he stood no chance.

"The easiest way is the best, Jennie," he said, in answer to his wife. "Our lives are worth more than all the money the banks of the State have got. Young Wild West has beat us out, and I am going to give in. That's all there is to it."

"I reckon this is a little different from last night, isn't it?" Wild observed, as he rode up and relieved the captain of his weapons. "Then it was your turn, but now it is mine. You can never tell what will happen, you know."

"Well, if it hadn't been for the Chinaman and the girl, I guess we would have won out," was the reply. "I am no squealer, so I'll take what is coming to me without wincing, Young Wild West. One thing, you can't say that we harmed you fellows any. We did not capture you for the purpose of hurting you; we just wanted to keep you out of the way till we got our job done. I planned the robbery of the bank, and if you had not come

along the chances are that we would have got away with the money. But everything has to come to an end some time or other. A human being is the same way. I have reached my end, as a bank robber, temporarily, anyhow. Your end will come, too, sooner or later. That's a sure thing, Young Wild West."

"I know that," Wild replied. "But I reckon no such galoot as you will hasten it. I wasn't born to be put out of the way by bank robbers; I feel sure of that."

Charlie and Jim were busy tying the hands of the prisoners now.

They did not make them dismount, but left them in the saddle, and when their hands had been tied behind them in a secure manner, they passed ropes under their horses and tied their ankles, so that they were compelled to sit there, no matter how much they wanted to get away.

Wild thought it best to tie the hands of the woman, too, especially as Mord had seen fit to bind Arietta when he captured her.

Then they started back to join Arietta and the Chinaman.

Half way to the spot they ran across the horse that had left the captain's wife when she was thrown from the one she was riding, and Jim easily captured it.

They soon reached the spot and Arietta gave an exclamation of delight when she saw the prisoners.

"Did you find the money on them, Wild?" she asked.

"No; we never searched them," was the reply.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to take it from them before we go any further?"

Wild did think so, and the result was that the stolen money was taken from the three men who had been carrying it.

Then the ride back to the mining town was started.

In due time they got there, and when it was learned by the inhabitants that the stolen money had been recovered there was a general rejoicing.

The prisoners were put in the lockup, and then the bank president insisted on keeping his word.

"Young Wild West," said he, "it was a race for gold that you started on, and you won. Here is the twenty-five per cent. of the money I promised you."

Wild did not want to take it, but the man was so insistent that he did so.

The cowboys who had assisted in the capture were given some of it, and the rest was divided among our friends.

It is needless to say that Hop came in for a pretty good share, in spite of his mistake of the night before.

Thus ends the story of "Young Wild West's Race for Gold; or, Arietta and the Bank Robbers."

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE TENDER-FOOT TOURIST; or, A GRIZZLY HUNT IN THE ROCKIES," which will be the next number (298) of "Wild West Weekly."

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain them from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JUNE 26, 1908.

Terms to Subscribers.

Single Copies.....	.05 Cents
One Copy Three Months.....	.65 "
One Copy Six Months.....	\$1.25
One Copy One Year.....	2.50

Postage Free.

How To SEND MONEY.

At our risk send P. O. Money Order, Check, or Registered Letter; remittances in any other way are at your risk. We accept Postage Stamps the same as cash. When sending silver wrap the coin in a separate piece of paper to avoid cutting the envelope. Write your name and address plainly. Address letters to

Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Sq., New York.

SOME GOOD ARTICLES.

Dr. Marage, of the Paris Academy of Medicine, read an interesting paper recently on the problem of making a voice carry in a large hall. His researches will prove useful to public speakers. He thinks that by exercise it is possible to train a voice so as to carry in a large assembly. He finds that the tenor voice is heard the best. Bass requires eight times the effort to produce the same carrying effect.

The world's record for a tarpon catch was broken the other day on the Panuco River by the Countess of Wilton, who has been stopping there with her husband, Sir Frederick Johnson, in their yacht Zenaida. The fish was 7 feet 10 inches long and 48 1-2 inches in girth. The former record, not well authenticated, was held by the American Consul at Trinidad, being 7 feet 4 inches in length.

"Silly goose" is an expression which should be used by the extremely ignorant alone. No bird of my acquaintance," says J. Cyril Crowley, "requires more patience to shoot with gun or camera, especially the latter. When feeding, you will find flocks varying in size on open ground, and nearly always on such ground that a stalk is impossible. On the outskirts of these flocks are sentries, with heads erect, eyes and ears alert. The slightest sound or movement, and you are detected. True descendants from the ancient preservers of Rome."

When the compositors of a Roman Catholic weekly newspaper struck for higher wages the proprietor, at his wits' end, went to the prioress of the convent. She was a woman of resource, and suggested that her nuns should go to the printing office and do the work. And they did. In a few days they had become fairly expert, and the paper appeared only one day late. The nuns made one characteristic stipulation, that the money they earned should go to the support of the strikers' families.

Santo Domingo is one of the few places in the world where amber occurs in any quantity. The bulk of the supply comes from the vicinity of Konigsberg, on the Baltic seacoast. There it occurs in the lower oligocene, and appears to have deposited originally in glauconitic beds of clay, which was afterward eroded by wave action and the amber distributed, though much of it is taken from beds in which it was originally deposited. Amber is simply fossilized resin, derived apparently from certain coniferous trees. The conditions under which it occurs in Santo Domingo do not appear to differ substantially from the Baltic coast. It is found near Santiago City, associated with lignite, sandstones, and conglomerates. These beds probably belong to the oligocene formation, and are found containing amber at a number of places on the north coast, as well as on both flanks of the Monte Cristi range. It also frequently occurs in the streams flowing through these beds.

The amber is usually in ovate lumps, from the size of a pea to a man's fist, often flattened, dull on the exterior, being covered with a kind of brownish crust.

Probably the oddest railway in this or any other country is a line in Maryland, twenty miles in length, which extends from Brandywine to Mechanicsville. The single train that runs each way daily is made up of the engine, one freight car, and one combination baggage and passenger car. The conductor of the train, who also acts as baggagemaster, is general manager of this odd little system. This Pooh Bah of an official issues his orders as general manager, and obeys them as conductor. When, in the latter capacity, he thinks the schedule should be changed—a not infrequent case—he notifies the general manager (himself), who, if he deems it advisable, makes up a new schedule, and issues running orders to the conductor (also himself), and the latter promptly obeys. There are no ticket agents along the route of this opera bouffe line. The conductor collects fares as on a street railway car, punching a hole in a slip of cardboard for each fare. This done, he will go into the baggage car to see that the trunks, if there are any, are properly delivered. His duties also include the care of mail and express packages. It follows, of course, that on this system nothing is lost or overlooked, for the general manager, conductor, baggagemaster, and express and mail agent has his eagle eye on everything.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES.

"Miss Thinley posed for Artist Dauber's latest picture." "You don't mean the scrawny Miss Thinley with the saucer eyes?" "Yes, I do." "What is the picture?" "It's called 'The Vision,' and it shows the dream of a man who had just partaken of four Welsh rarebits and three cocktails."

She is my enemy and I shall never speak to her again as long as I live. Well, if I were to meet her in the doorway of a department store on a very busy day, with thousands pressing to enter—Of course there are times when one simply has to stop and talk. Not to do so would be to violate old custom and make one's self odd.

"Rastus," said the neighbor, "I'd like to borrow that mule of yours." "Goodness sakes, boss," was the rejoinder, "I'd like to 'commodate you; but I's had some 'sperience wif de law. If a man is 'sponsible foh de acts of his agent an' I was to lend dat mule out it wouldn' be no time befo' I was arrested for assassination!"

"How did you come to elect him to Congress?" "Well," answered Farmer Cornfossel, "he was about the only man around here who didn't have any reg'lar business to tend to, an' we thought we'd send him along where he couldn't take up so much of our time tellin' stories."

"I am proud of this country's prosperity," said Mr. Dustin Stax. "Of course, as a patriot, you must be." "Not only as a patriot, but as a business man. It takes prosperity to enable the public to pay the increased prices that we financial leaders are demanding."

A couple of girls, after the manner of girls since the world was young, were recently discussing the affairs of their various friends. "I don't see why in the world Clara lets that little snob Charlie Blank come to see her so often!" the dark-haired one said. "They are together almost constantly." "Hum," the blonde commented, with a worldly wise little smile. "Well, I don't. I wouldn't!" her friend asserted. "He is not good looking and has such ugly ways." "Well, perhaps he has ugly ways; but such handsome means!" the other said, and something near a sigh got past the piece of fudge she hastened to put into her mouth.

A STRANGE CASE.

By HORACE APPLETON.

I was on a mission at Chillington, and my headquarters were at Melcham Court during the time. I was not sure of being a welcome guest, but for this I did not care, since it was the public I sought to serve and not a single individual.

Joab Melcham was reputed wealthy. He was master of Melcham Court, and lived in a style becoming the blue-blooded aristocracy from which he sprang. He was also president of Chillington Bank, and a stockholder in various other enterprises of importance. Among the common people he was not liked. He chilled and repulsed them with his frown, and people will not overlook such things.

At the time of which I am writing Andrew Mayne was cashier of the bank at Chillington, and he was in difficulty. It was a difficulty that promised to land the cashier in state prison for a term of years. It was his wife's tears and earnest protestations of her husband's innocence that induced me to look into the matter at all. Perhaps the reader will wonder why, since I am a detective, and at home in cases of crime in its every phase.

The reason was simply this: Andrew Mayne was in jail, charged with appropriating moneys not his own to the amount of forty thousand dollars, and he admitted his guilt with the coolest indifference, seemingly, as to his fate.

And yet his wife positively assured me that Andrew was innocent.

I of course received her assurances with a large degree of allowance.

"Your husband, madam, must be a queer man to confess guilt if he is really innocent. I have read of cases of this kind, but have always considered them myths. In my own experience I never met with such a case. I cannot see how Andrew Mayne can remain long outside of prison. If he is the man he admits himself to be, the state prison is the place for him!"

I fixed a cold glance on the wife's face while I talked. It was possible, I thought, that she knew her husband guilty, but hoped in some way to save him from merited doom.

There was that in the pale face and pleading eyes, however, that assured me that whatever Andrew Mayne was, his wife was an honest, earnest woman and devoted wife, and really a believer in the innocence of her unfortunate husband.

"How do you explain your husband's confession?" said I at length. "I cannot reconcile it with a theory of innocence."

"I know, sir, how strange it seems; but Andrew never took the money. There's a conspiracy somewhere to ruin Andrew."

"And he lends himself to it—for his own destruction?" I remarked, with an incredulous look.

"It does seem strange. You will not attempt to ferret out the robber, sir?"

There were tears in the comely little woman's eyes as she put the question.

"I will see your husband, and if there is any chance for work, you may depend upon it I will not shrink from the task."

With this assurance I left the Mayne cottage and repaired to the city jail. I found Andrew Mayne in anything but a pleasant mood. His haggard face and sunken eyes did not serve to prepossess me in favor of his innocence. His whole demeanor was that of a man laboring under some great mental trouble.

"I am guilty. The sooner the farce is over the better."

This was his answer to my inquiries.

"Why did you take the money? You had a living salary, with none but a wife to support beside yourself."

"Don't ask me. I plead guilty; I can say no more."

With those words ringing in my ears I left the jail and sought the open air.

Surely there was no chance for a case here. I had best return home at once and let the law take its course. When I uttered these words mentally, the pale, tear-wet face of Mollie Mayne came suddenly to haunt me, and to shake my faith in things visible both to the eye and ear.

After pacing up and down for a time I concluded that I would look into the matter a little further, and if I could find the least excuse for remaining on the case, I would do so. Court would not convene for four weeks, and this would give me ample time to investigate.

My next move was to interview the president of the bank, Joab Melcham. Since Mr. Melcham was one of those most interested in the defalcation, and, as I was, as a detective, no respecter of persons, I did not make the visit in the shape of an officer of justice. I wished to make the acquaintance of the wealthy owner of Melcham Court without reserve. As a detective I would be received graciously as a matter of course.

I learned that Melcham Court was minus a butler, the man who had filled the position for many years having departed this life very suddenly but a few weeks before the opening of this narrative. It was for the vacant place I applied. I had recommendations without number. I was always careful to supply myself with such necessities when needed, and they come in good stead just now.

While the banker read my credentials, I mentally reviewed him.

He was rather a handsome man, with silky beard and bright blue eyes, and not far from forty. His every movement was quick and energetic, showing great nervous force.

I was made up for the occasion, with mutton-chops and the dress of one who had seen better days. In fact, I represented myself as a broken-down English gentleman, who had sought America for opportunity of regaining a portion of my lost fortune, etc. I will not tire the reader with repeating my story here.

Joab Melcham cast a keen glance into my face, over my person, and then said:

"You will do."

That was sufficient, and I was installed as butler at Melcham Court.

It was an English house, and its master was English. I learned the weak side of the banker's nature—love for all things English—and at once ingratiated myself. Soon gentleman and butler were on an extremely friendly footing. Melcham had no family, save a family of servants. He was a widower, and I did not wonder that I often found him indulging a fit of blues.

What was I to gain by all this?

Was I not fooling away my time? I did not know myself. But one person was in my secret—Mollie Mayne. She encouraged me to look outside of Chillington jail for the embezzler, and so I continued to remain at Melcham Court.

One morning something occurred that set me to thinking deeply. I always delivered the banker's mail, morning and evening, usually to him in the library. On the morning in question, however, Melcham was late in rising, and I, having received several letters from the postman, went to the banker's chamber. The hour was late. The chamber door was slightly ajar, and as I had on cloth slippers, my feet made little noise. I came to a halt at the door, held for a moment by a strange sound from within—a deep groan, that seemed to come from the heart of one in terrible mental agony.

I stood rooted to the spot.

"My God! if this is true, and Andrew Mayne hears of it I am ruined. He must never know it—never!"

In husky accents came the words to my ears, and I knew they fell from the lips of Joab Melcham.

I waited a moment at the door, when, hearing a servant in the hall approaching it, I at once pushed open the chamber door and advanced into the room.

"Ha!"

A white face peered out from the curtains of the bed at me. I fancied I could see the large frame tremble, and the knuckles of the clinched hands were actually blue, so terrible was the grip of both in coverlid and curtain.

"Ah, it is you, John? Mail? Oh, yes, I am glad you brought it. I will be down soon."

He took the letter from the salver and I noticed that his hand trembled as he did so. I was fully convinced that Joab Melcham was laboring under some terrible excitement. He possessed great powers of self-control, however, and rapidly became calm.

I went from the room and began to cudgel my brain for the cause of my worthy master's extreme excitement. I knew the morning paper had been delivered to him earlier in the morning. Was it from this he had gained the intelligence that brought such agitation? I had not seen the paper when I entered the banker's bed-chamber, which led me to believe that he had concealed it on the sound of my approach.

It was after twelve when the banker came down. Partaking of a hasty lunch, he left the house and walked briskly toward the bank. Nothing but a slight paleness indicated the recent excitement that had possessed him.

After he was gone I again visited his room. I found nothing of the Morning Chronicle, yet I knew the paper had been taken to his room that morning. Evidently the banker had taken the paper with him; in this there was nothing strange, however. It was an easy matter to secure another from a passing newsboy, and I was soon examining its contents with lynx eyes.

I could discover nothing that could in any possible way cause the banker such excitement. I was on the point of laying down the paper, when my eye caught a familiar name. It was under the head of "Obituary." "Charles J. Mayne, a highly-respected citizen, died very suddenly at his home in — street, Montreal. Heart disease is supposed to be the cause. Mr. Mayne was nearly seventy, and a citizen of worth. He has relatives in the States."

This was all. The only thing to attract my attention was the fact that the name of the deceased was the same as that of the man who lay in Chillington jail a self-confessed thief.

That very day I sought an interview with Mrs. Mayne, the prisoner's young wife. I showed her the obituary notice and questioned her regarding it.

"Charles J. Mayne was my husband's father," she said. "They have not met for some years. I think Andrew will feel even worse than he does now when he learns the truth. Would it not be best to keep it from him for the present?"

"I will see."

Nevertheless I repaired at once to the jail and sought an interview with the prisoner. Of course, I had discarded the role of a butler at this time. I knew the banker would not return to Melcham Court until night, so did not worry about his discovering my absence.

When I showed the obituary notice to Andrew Mayne he came near falling under the blow.

"It has come at last," he said, in a voice husky with emotion. "Does Mr. Melcham know of this?"

"I am not able to state," was my evasive reply. "Would it affect him in any way if he did?"

"I wish to send a written word to the banker. Can I trust you to take it, Mr. Sharp?"

This was his answer to my question. He was deeply excited, and trembled not a little. I tried to get the fellow to confide in me what he wished to say to the banker, his late employer, but he persistently refused. At length I consented to be the bearer of a sealed letter to Joab Melcham. Paper and envelope were obtained of the jailer, and Andrew was permitted to write a note to the banker.

Sealing and directing it he placed it in my hand.

Joab Melcham came in late that night. I placed Andrew Mayne's letter in his hand and stood back respectfully while he perused it. I watched him narrowly, and saw that his face paled, and that he looked deeply annoyed.

He did not ask how I came by the letter, but at once ordered his carriage.

"I am going to Boston," he said, addressing me. "I shall drive out a few miles to see a man, and take the train there. You will explain to all who may call."

Soon after Mr. Melcham vanished, and his carriage wheels rattled away.

It was not Boston, but Canada, that the brave banker sought. If nothing occurred to interfere, he would leave danger and the soil of the States behind, by the time the sun rose on another day.

I was determined on a bold move, and made it.

When Joab Melcham stepped upon the platform of the little way station, I was not far behind him. He did not buy a ticket—he was too cunning for that. In ten minutes the train would be due.

"Mr. Melcham."

The fleeing banker turned and faced me quickly. He looked into the muzzle of a revolver.

"Not Canada, but a prison, my friend," I said coolly. At the same time I produced a pair of steel bracelets.

"The young fiend has peached!"

But he submitted, nevertheless. I knew then I had made no mistake. My man was near by with a light wagon, and Melcham went back to Chillington, instead of proceeding across the border.

He protested his innocence on the road; swore that Mayne had lied to save himself. He did not know that Mayne had as yet said nothing.

On the following day Chillington was astounded at the intelligence that the banker, Melcham, was under arrest for embezzlement. The case was plain enough after that.

Andrew Mayne had made no statement, but I knew that he had warned the banker of what he might expect, and it was not the young cashier's fault that Melcham had not escaped.

On learning of the bank president's arrest, Mayne did make a statement, which was afterward proved in court.

The cashier had taken upon himself the crime of which he knew Melcham was guilty, in order to shield his old father, who, some years before, would have gone to prison for the misappropriation of a few thousands, had not Melcham, then a young man, fled from the place in order not to testify against one who had befriended him. When Andrew Mayne caught Melcham in the act of robbing the bank of which he was himself president, Melcham pleaded for mercy, and reminded him of the elder Mayne's case, which the banker said was not too old to be resurrected. To save his father, Andrew Mayne consented to shoulder his employer's villainy.

In the letter written in jail, Mayne had simply mentioned the death of his father, and announced that he should now speak the truth. This was enough to alarm the embezzler, and set him on the road to Canada.

Andrew Mayne was set free. Melcham confessed his guilt and threw himself on the mercy of the court. He got ten years in the penitentiary, nevertheless.

These Books Tell You Everything!

A COMPLETE SET IS A REGULAR ENCYCLOPEDIA!

Each book consists of sixty-four pages, printed on good paper, in clear type and neatly bound in an attractive, illustrated cover. Most of the books are also profusely illustrated, and all of the subjects treated upon are explained in such a simple manner that any child can thoroughly understand them. Look over the list as classified and see if you want to know anything about the subjects mentioned.

THESE BOOKS ARE FOR SALE BY ALL NEWSDEALERS OR WILL BE SENT BY MAIL TO ANY ADDRESS FROM THIS OFFICE ON RECEIPT OF PRICE, TEN CENTS EACH, OR ANY THREE BOOKS FOR TWENTY-FIVE CENTS. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY. Address FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, N.Y.

MESMERISM.

No. 81. HOW TO MESMERIZE.—Containing the most approved methods of mesmerism; also how to cure all kinds of diseases by animal magnetism, or, magnetic healing. By Prof. Leo Hugo Koch, A. C. F., author of "How to Hypnotize," etc.

PALMISTRY.

No. 82. HOW TO DO PALMISTRY.—Containing the most approved methods of reading the lines on the hand, together with a full explanation of their meaning. Also explaining phrenology, and the key for telling character by the bumps on the head. By Leo Hugo Koch, A. C. S. Fully illustrated.

HYPNOTISM.

No. 83. HOW TO HYPNOTIZE.—Containing valuable and instructive information regarding the science of hypnotism. Also explaining the most approved methods which are employed by the leading hypnotists of the world. By Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S.

SPORTING.

No. 21. HOW TO HUNT AND FISH.—The most complete hunting and fishing guide ever published. It contains full instructions about guns, hunting dogs, traps, trapping and fishing, together with descriptions of game and fish.

No. 26. HOW TO ROW, SAIL AND BUILD A BOAT.—Fully illustrated. Every boy should know how to row and sail a boat. Full instructions are given in this little book, together with instructions on swimming and riding, companion sports to boating.

No. 47. HOW TO BREAK, RIDE AND DRIVE A HORSE.—A complete treatise on the horse. Describing the most useful horses for business, the best horses for the road; also valuable recipes for diseases peculiar to the horse.

No. 48. HOW TO BUILD AND SAIL CANOES.—A handy book for boys, containing full directions for constructing canoes and the most popular manner of sailing them. Fully illustrated. By C. Stansfield Hicks.

FORTUNE TELLING.

No. 1. NAPOLEON'S ORACULUM AND DREAM BOOK.—Containing the great oracle of human destiny; also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams, together with charms, ceremonies, and curious games of cards. A complete book.

No. 23. HOW TO EXPLAIN DREAMS.—Everybody dreams, from the little child to the aged man and woman. This little book gives the explanation to all kinds of dreams, together with lucky and unlucky days, and "Napoleon's Oraculum," the book of fate.

No. 28. HOW TO TELL FORTUNES.—Everyone is desirous of knowing what his future life will bring forth, whether happiness or misery, wealth or poverty. You can tell by a glance at this little book. Buy one and be convinced. Tell your own fortune. Tell the fortune of your friends.

No. 76. HOW TO TELL FORTUNES BY THE HAND.—Containing rules for telling fortunes by the aid of lines of the hand, or the secret of palmistry. Also the secret of telling future events by aid of moles, marks, scars, etc. Illustrated. By A. Anderson.

ATHLETIC.

No. 6. HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE.—Giving full instruction for the use of dumb bells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations. Every boy can become strong and healthy by following the instructions contained in this little book.

No. 10. HOW TO BOX.—The art of self-defense made easy. Containing over thirty illustrations of guards, blows, and the different positions of a good boxer. Every boy should obtain one of these useful and instructive books, as it will teach you how to box without an instructor.

No. 25. HOW TO BECOME A GYMNAST.—Containing full instructions for all kinds of gymnastic sports and athletic exercises. Embracing thirty-five illustrations. By Professor W. Macdonald. A handy and useful book.

No. 34. HOW TO FENCE.—Containing full instruction for fencing and the use of the broadsword; also instruction in archery. Described with twenty-one practical illustrations, giving the best positions in fencing. A complete book.

TRICKS WITH CARDS.

No. 51. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing explanations of the general principles of sleight-of-hand applicable to card tricks; of card tricks with ordinary cards, and not requiring sleight-of-hand; of tricks involving sleight-of-hand, or the use of specially prepared cards. By Professor Haffner. Illustrated.

No. 72. HOW TO DO SIXTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Embracing all of the latest and most deceptive card tricks, with illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 77. HOW TO DO FORTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing deceptive Card Tricks as performed by leading conjurors and magicians. Arranged for home amusement. Fully illustrated.

MAGIC.

No. 2. HOW TO DO TRICKS.—The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instruction on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book, as it will both amuse and instruct.

No. 22. HOW TO DO SECOND SIGHT.—Heller's second sight explained by his former assistant, Fred Hunt, Jr. Explaining how the secret dialogues were carried on between the magician and the boy on the stage; also giving all the codes and signals. The only authentic explanation of second sight.

No. 43. HOW TO BECOME A MAGICIAN.—Containing the grandest assortment of magical illusions ever placed before the public. Also tricks with cards, incantations, etc.

No. 68. HOW TO DO CHEMICAL TRICKS.—Containing over one hundred highly amusing and instructive tricks with chemicals. By A. Anderson. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 69. HOW TO DO SLEIGHT OF HAND.—Containing over fifty of the latest and best tricks used by magicians. Also containing the secret of second sight. Fully illustrated. By A. Anderson.

No. 70. HOW TO MAKE MAGIC TOYS.—Containing full directions for making Magic Toys and devices of many kinds. By A. Anderson. Fully illustrated.

No. 73. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH NUMBERS.—Showing many curious tricks with figures and the magic of numbers. By A. Anderson. Fully illustrated.

No. 75. HOW TO BECOME A CONJUROR.—Containing tricks with Dominoes, Dice, Cups and Balls, Hats, etc. Embracing thirty-six illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 78. HOW TO DO THE BLACK ART.—Containing a complete description of the mysteries of Magic and Sleight of Hand, together with many wonderful experiments. By A. Anderson. Illustrated.

MECHANICAL.

No. 29. HOW TO BECOME AN INVENTOR.—Every boy should know how inventions originated. This book explains them all, giving examples in electricity, hydraulics, magnetism, optics, pneumatics, mechanics, etc. The most instructive book published.

No. 56. HOW TO BECOME AN ENGINEER.—Containing full instructions how to proceed in order to become a locomotive engineer; also directions for building a model locomotive; together with a full description of everything an engineer should know.

No. 57. HOW TO MAKE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.—Full directions how to make a Banjo, Violin, Zither, Aeolian Harp, Xylophone and other musical instruments; together with a brief description of nearly every musical instrument used in ancient or modern times. Profusely illustrated. By Algernon S. Fitzgerald, for twenty years bandmaster of the Royal Bengal Marines.

No. 59. HOW TO MAKE A MAGIC LANTERN.—Containing a description of the lantern, together with its history and invention. Also full directions for its use and for painting slides. Handsomely illustrated. By John Allen.

No. 71. HOW TO DO MECHANICAL TRICKS.—Containing complete instructions for performing over sixty Mechanical Tricks. By A. Anderson. Fully illustrated.

LETTER WRITING.

No. 11. HOW TO WRITE LOVE-LETTERS.—A most complete little book, containing full directions for writing love-letters, and when to use them, giving specimen letters for young and old.

No. 12. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.—Giving complete instructions for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.

No. 24. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO GENTLEMEN.—Containing full directions for writing to gentlemen on all subjects; also giving sample letters for instruction.

No. 53. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS.—A wonderful little book, telling you how to write to your sweetheart, your father, mother, sister, brother, employer; and, in fact, everybody and anybody you wish to write to. Every young man and every young lady in the land should have this book.

No. 74. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS CORRECTLY.—Containing full instructions for writing letters on almost any subject; also rules for punctuation and composition, with specimen letters.

THE STAGE.

No. 41. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK END MEN'S JOKE BOOK.—Containing a great variety of the latest jokes used by the most famous end men. No amateur minstrel is complete without this wonderful little book.

No. 42. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK STUMP SPEAKER.—Containing a varied assortment of stump speeches, Negro, Dutch and Irish. Also end men's jokes. Just the thing for home amusement and amateur shows.

No. 45. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK MINSTREL GUIDE AND JOKE BOOK.—Something new and very instructive. Every boy should obtain this book, as it contains full instructions for organizing an amateur minstrel troupe.

No. 65. MULDOON'S JOKES.—This is one of the most original joke books ever published, and it is brimful of wit and humor. It contains a large collection of songs, jokes, conundrums, etc., of Terrence Muldoon, the great wit, humorist, and practical joker of the day. Every boy who can enjoy a good substantial joke should obtain a copy immediately.

No. 79. HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR.—Containing complete instructions how to make up for various characters on the stage; together with the duties of the Stage Manager, Prompter, Scenic Artist and Property Man. By a prominent Stage Manager.

No. 80. GUS WILLIAMS' JOKE BOOK.—Containing the latest jokes, anecdotes and funny stories of this world-renowned and ever popular German comedian. Sixty-four pages; handsome colored cover containing a half-tone photo of the author.

HOUSEKEEPING.

No. 16. HOW TO KEEP A WINDOW GARDEN.—Containing full instructions for constructing a window garden either in town or country, and the most approved methods for raising beautiful flowers at home. The most complete book of the kind ever published.

No. 30. HOW TO COOK.—One of the most instructive books on cooking ever published. It contains recipes for cooking meats, fish, game, and oysters; also pies, puddings, cakes and all kinds of pastry, and a grand collection of recipes by one of our most popular cooks.

No. 37. HOW TO KEEP HOUSE.—It contains information for everybody, boys, girls, men and women; it will teach you how to make almost anything around the house, such as parlor ornaments, brackets, cements, Aeolian harps, and bird lime for catching birds.

ELECTRICAL.

No. 46. HOW TO MAKE AND USE ELECTRICITY.—A description of the wonderful uses of electricity and electro magnetism; together with full instructions for making Electric Toys, Batteries, etc. By George Trebel, A. M., M. D. Containing over fifty illustrations.

No. 64. HOW TO MAKE ELECTRICAL MACHINES.—Containing full directions for making electrical machines, induction coils, dynamos, and many novel toys to be worked by electricity. By R. A. R. Bennett. Fully illustrated.

No. 67. HOW TO DO ELECTRICAL TRICKS.—Containing a large collection of instructive and highly amusing electrical tricks, together with illustrations. By A. Anderson.

ENTERTAINMENT.

No. 9. HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.—By Harry Kennedy. The secret given away. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions, by a practical professor (delighting multitudes every night with his wonderful imitations), can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the greatest book ever published, and there's millions (of fun) in it.

No. 20. HOW TO ENTERTAIN AN EVENING PARTY.—A very valuable little book just published. A complete compendium of games, sports, card diversions, comic recitations, etc., suitable for parlor or drawing-room entertainment. It contains more for the money than any book published.

No. 35. HOW TO PLAY GAMES.—A complete and useful little book, containing the rules and regulations of billiards, bagatelle, backgammon, croquet, dominoes, etc.

No. 36. HOW TO SOLVE CONUNDRUMS.—Containing all the leading conundrums of the day, amusing riddles, curious catches and witty sayings.

No. 52. HOW TO PLAY CARDS.—A complete and handy little book, giving the rules and full directions for playing Euchre, Cribbage, Casino, Forty-Five, Rounce, Pedro Sancho, Draw Poker, Auction Pitch, All Fours, and many other popular games of cards.

No. 66. HOW TO DO PUZZLES.—Containing over three hundred interesting puzzles and conundrums, with key to same. A complete book. Fully illustrated. By A. Anderson.

ETIQUETTE.

No. 13. HOW TO DO IT; OR, BOOK OF ETIQUETTE.—It is a great life secret, and one that every young man desires to know all about. There's happiness in it.

No. 33. HOW TO BEHAVE.—Containing the rules and etiquette of good society and the easiest and most approved methods of appearing to good advantage at parties, balls, the theatre, church, and in the drawing-room.

DECLAMATION.

No. 27. HOW TO RECITE AND BOOK OF RECITATIONS.—Containing the most popular selections in use, comprising Dutch dialect, French dialect, Yankee and Irish dialect pieces, together with many standard readings.

No. 31. HOW TO BECOME A SPEAKER.—Containing fourteen illustrations, giving the different positions requisite to become a good speaker, reader and elocutionist. Also containing gems from all the popular authors of prose and poetry, arranged in the most simple and concise manner possible.

No. 49. HOW TO DEBATE.—Giving rules for conducting debates, outlines for debates, questions for discussion, and the best sources for procuring information on the questions given.

SOCIETY.

No. 3. HOW TO FLIRT.—The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of hardkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers, which is interesting to everybody, both old and young. You cannot be happy without one.

No. 4. HOW TO DANCE. is the title of a new and handsome little book just issued by Frank Tousey. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ball-room and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.

No. 5. HOW TO MAKE LOVE.—A complete guide to love, courtship and marriage, giving sensible advice, rules and etiquette to be observed, with many curious and interesting things not generally known.

No. 17. HOW TO DRESS.—Containing full instruction in the art of dressing and appearing well at home and abroad, giving the selections of colors, material, and how to have them made up.

No. 18. HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL.—One of the brightest and most valuable little books ever given to the world. Everybody wishes to know how to become beautiful, both male and female. The secret is simple, and almost costless. Read this book and be convinced how to become beautiful.

BIRDS AND ANIMALS.

No. 7. HOW TO KEEP BIRDS.—Handsomely illustrated and containing full instructions for the management and training of the canary, mockingbird, bobolink, blackbird, parakeet, parrot, etc.

No. 39. HOW TO RAISE DOGS, POULTRY, PIGEONS AND RABBITS.—A useful and instructive book. Handsomely illustrated. By Ira Drowfaw.

No. 40. HOW TO MAKE AND SET TRAPS.—Including hints on how to catch moles, weasels, otter, rats, squirrels and birds. Also how to cure skins. Copiously illustrated. By J. Harrington Keene.

No. 50. HOW TO STUFF BIRDS AND ANIMALS.—A valuable book, giving instructions in collecting, preparing, mounting and preserving birds, animals and insects.

No. 54. HOW TO KEEP AND MANAGE PETS.—Giving complete information as to the manner and method of raising, keeping, taming, breeding, and managing all kinds of pets; also giving full instructions for making cages, etc. Fully explained by twenty-eight illustrations, making it the most complete book of the kind ever published.

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. 8. HOW TO BECOME A SCIENTIST.—A useful and instructive book, giving a complete treatise on chemistry; also experiments in acoustics, mechanics, mathematics, chemistry, and directions for making fireworks, colored fires, and gas balloons. This book cannot be equalled.

No. 14. HOW TO MAKE CANDY.—A complete hand-book for making all kinds of candy, ice-cream, syrups, essences, etc., etc.

No. 84. HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHOR.—Containing full information regarding choice of subjects, the use of words and the manner of preparing and submitting manuscript. Also containing valuable information as to the neatness, legibility and general composition of manuscript, essential to a successful author. By Prince Hiland.

No. 38. HOW TO BECOME YOUR OWN DOCTOR.—A wonderful book, containing useful and practical information in the treatment of ordinary diseases and ailments common to every family. Abounding in useful and effective recipes for general complaints.

No. 55. HOW TO COLLECT STAMPS AND COINS.—Containing valuable information regarding the collecting and arranging of stamps and coins. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 58. HOW TO BE A DETECTIVE.—By Old King Brady, the world-known detective. In which he lays down some valuable and sensible rules for beginners, and also relates some adventures and experiences of well-known detectives.

No. 60. HOW TO BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER.—Containing useful information regarding the Camera and how to work it; also how to make Photographic Magic Lantern Slides and other Transparencies. Handsomely illustrated. By Captain W. De W. Abney.

No. 6. HOW TO BECOME A WEST POINT MILITARY CADET.—Containing full explanations how to gain admittance, course of Study, Examinations, Duties, Staff of Officers, Post Guard, Police Regulations, Fire Department, and all a boy should know to be a Cadet. Compiled and written by Lu Senarens, author of "How to Become a Naval Cadet."

No. 63. HOW TO BECOME A NAVAL CADET.—Complete instructions of how to gain admission to the Annapolis Naval Academy. Also containing the course of instruction, description of grounds and buildings, historical sketch, and everything a boy should know to become an officer in the United States Navy. Compiled and written by Lu Senarens, author of "How to Become a West Point Military Cadet."

PRICE 10 CENTS EACH, OR 3 FOR 25 CENTS.

Address FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

Latest Issues

"WIDE AWAKE WEEKLY"

CONTAINING STORIES OF BOY FIREMEN.

COLORED COVERS.

32 PAGES.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 106 Young Wide Awake's Race With Death; or, Battling With the Elements. | 111 Young Wide Awake's Dangerous Deal; or, The Only Chance for Life. |
| 107 Young Wide Awake's Courage; or, The Capture of the "Norwich Six." | 112 Young Wide Awake and the Factory Boys; or, The Feat that Made Him Famous. |
| 108 Young Wide Awake's Little Pard; or, The Boy Hero of the Flames. | 113 Young Wide Awake's Secret Enemies; or, The Plot to Destroy a City. |
| 109 Young Wide Awake's Fiery Duel; or, Teaching the Nephews a Lesson. | 114 Young Wide Awake's Sudden Fear; or, The Fireman's Trick that Won the Day. |
| 110 Young Wide Awake and the Old Vet; or, Working Shoulder to Shoulder. | 115 Young Wide Awake and the Wreckers; or, Saving the Government Mail. |

"FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY"

CONTAINING STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

COLORED COVERS.

32 PAGES.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 134 A Big Risk; or, The Game that Won. | 139 Facing the World; or, A Poor Boy's Fight for Fortune. |
| 135 On Pirate's Isle; or, The Treasure of the Seven Craters. | 140 A Tip Worth a Million; or, How a Boy Worked It in Wall Street. |
| 136 A Wall Street Mystery; or, The Boy Who Beat the Syndicate. | 141 Billy, the Cabin Boy; or, The Treasure of Skeleton Island. |
| 137 Dick Hadley's Mine; or, The Boy Gold Diggers of Mexico. | 142 Just His Luck; or, Climbing the Ladder of Fame and Fortune. |
| 138 A Boy Stockbroker; or, From Errand Boy to Millionaire. (A Wall Street Story.) | 143 Out With His Own Circus; or, The Success of a Young Barnum. |

"WORK AND WIN"

CONTAINING THE GREAT FRED FEARNOT STORIES.

COLORED COVERS.

32 PAGES.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 492 Fred Fearnot and the Street Singer; or, The Little Queen of Song. | 496 Fred Fearnot's New Stroke; or, Beating the Champion Swimmer. |
| 493 Fred Fearnot's Lucky Hit; or, Winning Out in the Ninth. | 497 Fred Fearnot's Quarrel with Terry; or, Settling a Friendly Dispute. |
| 494 Fred Fearnot and the Raft Boy; or, Rough Life on the Mississippi. | 498 Fred Fearnot's Schoolboy Stars; or, Teaching a Young Nine the Game. |
| 495 Fred Fearnot's Steal to Second; or, The Trick that Turned the Tide. | 499 Fred Fearnot's Track Team; or, Beating the College Champions. |

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,

24 Union Square, New York.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our Weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following Order Blank and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

190

DEAR SIR—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

....copies of WORK AND WIN, Nos.....
.... " " WIDE AWAKE WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " WILD WEST WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....
.... " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....
.... " " SECRET SERVICE, Nos.....
.... " " FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, etc., of Western Life.

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

32 PAGES

HANDSOME COLORED COVERS

PRICE 5 CENTS

All of these exciting stories are founded on facts. Young Wild West is a hero with whom the author was acquainted. His daring deeds and thrilling adventures have never been surpassed. They form the base of the most dashing stories ever published. Read the following numbers of this most interesting magazine and be convinced:

LATEST ISSUES:

- 249 Young Wild West's Bareback Beat; or, The Boss Boy of the Broncho Busters.
- 250 Young Wild West at Fire Hill; or, How Arietta Saved the Flag.
- 251 Young Wild West and the Greaser Giant; or, "Mexican Mike's Mistake.
- 252 Young Wild West at Skeleton Ranch; or, Arietta and the Death Trap.
- 253 Young Wild West's Gold Grip; and How He Held the Claim.
- 254 Young Wild West and the Gray Gang; or, Arietta's Daring Device.
- 255 Young Wild West at Lonesome Licks; or, The Phantom of Pilgrim Pass.
- 256 Young Wild West's Biggest Strike; or, Arietta and the Abandoned Mine.
- 257 Young Wild West and the River Rangers; or, The Cave Queen of the Yellowstone.
- 258 Young Wild West's Cowboy Call; or, Arietta and the Smugglers.
- 259 Young Wild West and the Moqui Medicine Man; or, Doing the Dance of Death.
- 260 Young Wild West on a Treasure Trail; or, Arietta and the Silver Lode.
- 261 Young Wild West and the Deadwood Den; or, The Fight for Half a Million.
- 262 Young Wild West as a Prairie Pilot; or, Arietta and the Broncho Queen.
- 263 Young Wild West Laying Down the Law; or, The "Bad" Men of Black Ball.
- 264 Young Wild West's Paying Placer; or, Arietta's Lucky Shot.
- 265 Young Wild West's Double Trap; or, Downing a Dangerous Gang.
- 266 Young Wild West after the Mexican Raiders; or, Arietta on a Hot Trail.
- 267 Young Wild West and the Navajo Chief; or, Fierce Times on the Plains.
- 268 Young Wild West Chasing the Horse Thieves; or, Arietta and the Cerral Mystery.
- 269 Young Wild West and the Mine Girl; or, The Secret Band of Silver Shaft.
- 270 Young Wild West Exposing the Express Robbers; or, With Arietta in Golddust City.
- 271 Young Wild West and the Cowboy Trailer; or, The Ranchman's Revenge.
- 272 Young Wild West and the Missing Scout; or, Arietta and the Madman.
- 273 Young Wild West Doomed to Death; or, Arietta and the Rifle Queen.
- 274 Young Wild West on a Golden Trail; or, The Mystery of Magic Pass.
- 275 Young Wild West Fighting the Indians; or, The Uprising of the Utes.
- 276 Young Wild West on a Cattle Range; or, Arietta and the "Bad" Cowboy.
- 277 Young Wild West's Gallop for Glory; or, The Death League of Ace High.

- 278 Young Wild West's Silver Search; or, Arietta and the Lost Treasure.
- 279 Young Wild West at Death Gorge; or, Cheyenne Charlie's Hard Pan Hit.
- 280 Young Wild West and "Monterey Bill"; or, Arietta's Game of Bluff.
- 281 Young Wild West and the Deadshot Cowboy; or, A High Old Time at Buckhorn Ranch.
- 282 Young Wild West's Cavalry Charge; or, The Shot that Saved Arietta's Life.
- 283 Young Wild West's Three Days' Hunt; or, The Raiders of Red Ravine.
- 284 Young Wild West and "Silver Stream"; or, The White Girl Captive of the Sioux.
- 285 Young Wild West and the Disputed Claim; or, Arietta's Golden Shower.
- 286 Young Wild West and the Greaser Guide; or, The Trap that Failed to Work.
- 287 Young Wild West's Ripping Round-Up; or, The Prairie Peril.
- 288 Young Wild West's Toughest Trail; or, Baffled.
- 289 Young Wild West at "Forbidden Pass," and How He Paid the Toll.
- 290 Young Wild West and the Indian Traitor; or, the "Red" Brigade.
- 291 Young Wild West and the Masked Cowboy; or, the Rope.
- 292 Young Wild West and the Ranchero's Daughter; or, A Time in Mexico.
- 293 Young Wild West and the Sand Hill "Terrors"; or, The Road Agents of the Santa Fe Trail.
- 294 Young Wild West After "White Horse Jack"; or, Arietta and the Wild Mustang.
- 295 Young Wild West and the Cattle Branders; or, Crooked Work on the Big G Ranch.
- 296 Young Wild West's Four Foes; or, The Secret Band of Cold Camp.
- 297 Young Wild West's Race for Gold; or, Arietta and the Bank Robbers.
- 298 Young Wild West and the Tenderfoot Tourist; or, A Grizzly Hunt in the Rockies.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,

24 Union Square, N. Y.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our Weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following Order Blank and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

190

DEAR SIR—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

-copies of WORK AND WIN, Nos.....
- " " WIDE AWAKE WEEKLY, Nos.....
- " " WILD WEST WEEKLY, Nos.....
- " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....
- " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....
- " " SECRET SERVICE, Nos.....
- " " FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY, Nos.....
- " " Ten-Cent Hand Books, Nos.....

Name..... Street and No..... Town..... State.....